COMMENTARY

KHRUSHCHEV'S "FLEXIBLE COMMUNISM"

The 21st Congress in Moscow

RICHARD LOWENTHAL

THE 21st Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union was more remarkable for the problems it shelved or disguised than for those which it solved. It had nothing of the bold, clearcut decisiveness of the 20th Congress held three years ago—the Congress which Khrushchev's "secret" speech on Stalin's crimes made truly historic. Not that the Congress this January went back in any substantial way on the achievements of its predecessor: the break with the Stalinist tradition of mass terrorism, and the transition from an economic system based primarily on coercion to one largely based on incentive. These developments, which have transformed the lives of the peoples of the Soviet Union and of which the 20th Congress was the most dramatic expression, continue unimpaired. But Khrushchev's very success in freeing Soviet society from some of the shackles of Stalinism has meant that the country is now moving into new, uncharted territory and that its rulers are faced with new and partly unexpected problems.

These are no longer the difficulties caused by the succession crisis, or even by the crisis of authority provoked by Khrushchev's disclosures about Stalin's "mistakes." On the contrary, the liquidation of these crisis phenomena was responsible for the only two developments at the 21st Congress which mark a partial reversal of the "line" of the 20th. One was the end of the fiction of collective leadership, and the beginning of an open personality cult of Khrushchev, whom speaker after speaker hailed as the "soul" of the Central Committee, the initiator of every beneficent reform, and the St. George who singlehandedly saved the party from successive dragons—first from Beria and his "gang," then from the "anti-party group" of Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, Shepilov, and Bulganin, and finally from the would-be Bonapartism of Marshal Zhukov. But Khrushchev, amid all his talk of collective leadership, had in fact laid the safe foundations of his power at the 20th Congress; the Central Committee of Khrushchev supporters elected at that Congress in February 1956 proved decisive in the crisis of June 1957. The important changes from Stalinism were not the sham concessions to inner-party democracy, but the loosening of terrorist pressure on the people in general. Even now, the important limitation on the new dictator's power does not lie in the fact that the members of the "anti-party group" were not expelled at the Congress (they may

WHAT is the nature and likely future of Khrushchevian Communism? RICHARD LOWENTHAL, a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY and diplomatic correspondent of the London *Observer*, assesses the recent Soviet Party Congress.

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still be, and Malenkov may even be tried for his participation in Stalin's purges, if Khrushchev finds it necessary), but rather in the new criminal code enacted before the Congress, which rejects the former principle of permitting measures against entire "dangerous" categories of people independent of their individual actions. Collective leadership was a passing phenomenon of the succession crisis, the criminal code is not.

The other reversal of the 1956 line concerns the Russian Communist party's leading position within the Soviet bloc, which was profoundly shaken by the crisis of authority which followed Khrushchev's 1955 journey to Belgrade and his "secret" disclosures at the 20th Congress. After the experience of Poland and Hungary, ideological "polycentrism" in the Communist movement was rejected and "common laws" of "socialist construction" were laid down in the Moscow declaration of the twelve ruling Communist parties in November 1957. The principle of the Soviet Union's "leading role" was restored, with Chinese help. But following the divergences between Soviet and Chinese Communists which manifested themselves in 1958 and their diplomatic resolution, Khrushchev at the 21st Congress deliberately rejected the Stalinist formula of the "leading role" of the Soviet Union and its Communist party, declaring instead that the USSR stands "at the head of the socialist camp." The semantic difference is that "leading role," as understood by Stalin, implied a right to tell each Communist party what to do, in domestic as well as foreign affairs, and has therefore been consistently rejected by Gomulka and others; whereas the Soviet Union's position "at the head of the socialist camp," based both on its power and its more advanced experience in building "socialism" and "communism," merely implies the right to lead in foreign policy and to lay down a common ideology. In practice, this amounts to recognizing the right of each ruling Communist party to determine the domestic application of the "common laws of socialist construction"—a right claimed for different reasons by both Mao Tse-tung and Gomulka—so long as they recognize the common laws and do not claim wider ideological significance for their peculiar institutions, as do the Yugoslavs. This, too, remains distinctly different from the Stalinist position; again, "polycentrism" was a passing crisis phenomenon, but the degree of internal autonomy now conceded to the "junior" parties is not.

Thus, the idea that the consolidation of the party regime and of the Soviet empire under Khrushchev's leadership has meant a return to Stalinist methods was not borne out by the 21st Congress. On the other hand, the Congress decisively refuted the opposite idea, namely, that the break with Stalinism initiated an emancipation from Communist doctrine, and that Soviet society under Khrushchev is forging ahead on "practicist" lines with American productivity as its only inspiring goal. True, the vision of overtaking American output and living standards has once more been held out to the Rusisan people, as it often has been since the beginning of Stalin's first five-year plan; but the Congress emphatically placed this in the ideological framework of "the building of communism." The latter, according to the definitions of the Congress, depends not just on higher output, better incomes, and shorter hours, but on another major change in the relations of production: the obliteration of the structural difference between state ownership and collective-farm ownership, and between the classes of state-employed workers and kolkhoz (collective farm) peasants. In other words, the post-Stalin concessions to the peasantry, which resulted in a spectacular improvement in output, are to be followed by another revolutionary change in the position of the kolkhoz peasants. This change, as spelled out in Khrushchev's report and since illustrated in the Soviet press, is to lead both to the eventual disappearance of the peasants' private cows, which even Stalin did not dare to touch in the last twenty years of his life, and to the replacement of the traditional villages by the "agrotowns" first

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urged by Khrushchev in 1951, but abandoned at the time as impracticable.

To the non-ideological common sense of the Western observer, the obvious question is why Khrushchev cannot leave well enough alone. Clearly, his recent "pro-peasant" agricultural policy has been a good thing not only for the peasants but for the workers, who got more and better food, and for Soviet society as a whole, which has become relatively more prosperous and more contented. On the other hand, any attempt to press the peasants into the ideological pattern now outlined for the "higher stage of communism" is fraught with a double risk—the risk of simple failure, if no pressure is used, and the risk of causing a setback to agricultural output (in particular, to the much vaunted growth in meat and milk production) if serious pressure is applied. Why, the outsider may well ask, should Khrushchev bother about the "higher stage of communism" when he is doing remarkably well without it?

Khrushchev and his executives are indeed clearly aware of these risks: that much is shown by the hesitations and indecisions of the Congress over the pace and the methods for achieving the desired transformation of the Soviet countryside. But their power depends entirely on the party regime, and the party's cohesion depends on its ideology: what, indeed, would be the need for a party dictatorship in a society that could prosper by itself, as it were, without continuous transformations foisted upon it from above? The recent concessions to the kolkhoz peasants—above all, the sale to the kolkhozes of the equipment of the state-owned machine-tractor stations and the replacement of the former system of various types of agricultural delivery quotas by state purchases at uniform and tolerable prices—have reduced the power of the rural party officials to exert pressure on the kolkhoz from outside; they have had to be promised increased scope for pressing for its transformation from within. The claim of the Chinese Communists, with their new communes, to have discovered a short-cut to the "higher stage of communism" has probably strengthened the need to reassure the Soviet party cadres that their own leaders have not abandoned that goal, and certainly created the need to demonstrate to the world Communist movement that the Soviet Union is still ahead on the road to communism. And there are indications that, even within Khrushchev's own team of leaders, there has been anxiety that the party fall into a "peasant deviation"—an anxiety based partly on changes in the social composition of the party which have been carefully concealed from the Congress, and which go far to explain some of its oddities.

To begin with what may be called Khrushchev's "guilty secret." The share of "kolkhoz peasants' among the 8.2 million-members and candidate-members of the Soviet Communist party (CPSU) has in recent years increased considerably at the expense of the share of "workers" (as both terms are officially defined), and at present probably far exceeds that of the industrial workers. This development began even before the 20th Congress, as a result of the drive to increase the number and strength of party cells in the kolkhozes; but the statistical balance was thoroughly upset by last year's transfer to the kolkhoz payrolls of the machine-tractor station personnel, including about a quarter of a million party members, who were thus transformed from state-paid "workers" into "peasants." Indirect confirmation of this development may be found in the report of the credentials committee of the 21st Congress, in which workers and kolkhoz peasants are *for the first time* not counted separately: "399 workers and kolkhoz peasants," are listed as being "among the delegates," and elsewhere: "two-thirds of the new members admitted to the party during the past year were workers or kolkhoz peasants." If a general report on the party organization had been on the agenda, such concealment would not have been possible; but as this was an extraordinary Congress without the usual report of the Central Committee, the issue could be avoided.

Again, to the outsider this seems a strange thing to worry about. After all, the CPSU

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is not a democratic party whose policy reflects the interests of the majority of its members, but a totalitarian organization which uses its members to carry out policy in their respective sectors of society. The fact that the Chinese Communists had a large majority of peasant members throughout the civil war did not divert them from their goal. Moreover, by far the largest part of the CPSU membership has long been neither workers nor peasants, but members of the so-called Soviet intelligentsia, i.e. the bureaucratic "new class." Also, most of the recent shift from workers to peasants is, as we have seen, simply the statistical reflection of the transfer of the same tractorists, doing the same work, to a different payroll. And, anyhow, will not the "building of communism" gradually obliterate the class difference between workers and kolkhoz peasants?

Yet while all this is true, it is also true that to a Communist mind, the kolkhoz peasants are still the most backward class of the new society; and while official doctrine proclaims the aim of obliterating the class difference, it also recognizes that the difference still exists at this time. The "workers and peasants alliance," ritually hailed as the foundation of the regime, is still conceived of as an alliance between two different classes, and within that alliance the party is supposed to insure the "leading role of the working class." The difficulty is that the Communists themselves cannot admit that their party is not a working-class party; and the disclosure that the working-class element of their membership, having long been overtaken by the bureaucratic upper crust, was now in danger of being overtaken by the kolkhoz peasants as well, would have come as a profound shock to the rank and file—including many of the so-called peasants, who are often themselves party officials delegated to work in the kolkhozes.

It may be a reflection of this dilemma that Khrushchev, in talking at the Congress of the workers and peasants alliance, preferred not to mention the leading role of the working class—while Mikhail Suslov, on the contrary, stressed that the disappearance of class differences between workers and peasants "will take a long time," and that "until class distinctions are erased, the working class, the foremost class of society, will continue to play the leading role in the state." Suslov opened his speech by a reminder that the Congress, being an "extraordinary" one, had not heard a regular report of the Central Committee; this may have been a hint at the critical topics temporarily excluded from public discussion, but bound to come up at the next regular Congress.

These signs of ideological uneasiness point to the fact that there is an inner-party pressure to restore the party's working-class character, i.e. to stop yielding to the peasants and to tighten control over them again. This is *not,* in the main, a pressure arising from the Stalinist past, or from the defeated old Stalinists of the "anti-party group"; in fact, the agricultural reforms which created the new problems were introduced only last year, after that group had been fully defeated over quite different issues. It arises, on the contrary, from the very nature of the party regime itself and from the new problems created for it by the agricultural reforms; and it may give rise—or may already have given rise—to quite new disagreements within the victorious Khrushchevian leadership. It also makes this leadership more vulnerable to inner-party criticism than it would otherwise be in view of its incontestable production successes, and may be one of the reasons why Khrushchev, having failed to obtain an unconditional recantation from his defeated opponents, preferred not to bring their case formally before the Congress. The risk was that they might have effectively accused him before that forum of a "peasant deviation" and of "watering down the working-class character of the party."

IN RECENT months, this inner-party pressure to push the peasants faster toward "communism" coincided with the external challenge to Soviet authority from the Chinese Communists, as expressed in their original resolution on the creation of communes last August. Indeed, that challenge

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may have been the reason why this special Congress of the Soviet Communist party—the first such "extraordinary" one in its history—was called a year before the next regularly scheduled Congress was due to meet. The decision to call the Congress was taken in September, within a fortnight of the Chinese resolution; the point of the Congress was not simply to adopt the new seven-year plan, which had in fact been done before, but to present this plan as "the first stage in the all round construction of communism"; and the preparation for the Congress in the party's theoretical journals, as well as Khrushchev's report to the Congress itself, assembled a whole array of arguments which, without ever mentioning China, seemed clearly designed to answer the challenge.

The challenge in question did not consist in the creation of the new Chinese communes as such. Their basic purpose was to achieve a rapid increase in China's industrial output despite the crippling shortage of capital, by using the country's immense labor reserves for the massive creation of cottage industries on a low technical level; and to bring about the necessary rationalization of rural labor, the freeing of the peasants' idle time for industrial and training purposes, by combining the collective farms into large, district-size units of up to ten thousand families working under military discipline. The attempt to change the working conditions of a hundred million peasant families in this way within a few months was overambitious, not only because of possible peasant resistance, but because of the shortage of trained cadres and the underestimation of the transport and distribution problems involved. But as an original method of speeding the early stages of the industrial revolution in an overpopulated country, it was not in itself utopian.

Yet, in the desire to create the necessary enthusiasm for the tremendous efforts required, the Chinese Communists did present their new program as a shortcut to utopia. If labor was to be rationalized, women had to be set free from domestic labor as well—so the communes were to build communal dining halls and even communal dormitories. If the peasants were to renounce their private patches of land and to eat communally, their meals had to be "free" (counting as a part of their wage), and other necessities might be distributed communally in the same way. Was not this doling out of rations "to each according to his needs" the distribution principle envisaged by Marx for the "higher stage of communism"? Come to think of it, was not the commune a way of ending the distinction between town and country, or at any rate the professional division between industrial and rural labor—a goal also envisaged by Marx for this ultimate stage? And was not the merging of the collective farms in larger units where management and district administration coincided, and where buying and selling outside the unit were in the hands of government organs, a direct way of turning collective property into all-national property?

By such arguments the Chinese Communists managed to persuade themselves that, despite China's poverty and technical backwardness, they were getting ahead of the Russians on the road to communism—ahead in the liquidation of the difference between state and collective ownership; ahead in overcoming the separation of town and country; ahead in "liberating" women from the family and introducing communal forms of living; ahead in achieving near equality and distribution according to need.

From a strict Marxist point of view, these arguments were a lot of utopian nonsense: communism requires abundance as its material basis; rationing necessities in military style is not distribution according to needs in the Marxian sense, and part-time work by peasants in cottage industries at a low level of skill does not overcome the separation of town and country. But the Chinese arguments were attractive to Communists in Asia and even in backward European countries like Albania and Bulgaria; and they were bound to provoke questions among the Soviet Communists as to what *they* were doing to speed the march to communism.

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The Soviet leaders perceived the ideological challenge, and they proceeded in their pre-Congress campaign to point out just why the Chinese arguments were nonsense—without ever mentioning China. In fact, the Soviet press scarcely mentioned the Chinese communes; what reports there were stressed the low technical level of the whole undertaking. But theoretical articles on the Soviets' own road to communism insisted on the necessity of reaching the highest technical level, and on abundance as the basis for distribution according to need. By December, this campaign, combined with the Chinese Communists' own difficulties, and presumably with strong, behind-the-scene Soviet warnings—and alternative promises of capital aid—had done its work. In a new resolution, the Chinese Communist Central Committee not only warned against such exaggerated measures as the breaking up of family life, the pressure for excessive working hours, and the reduction of differentiated money wages, but also withdrew utopian claims about having discovered a shortcut to communism. There was, they said, the germ of that higher stage in the communes, but it was still a long way off; the creation of communes did not mean that the transition had been made from collective to all-national property, and even the latter would not mean the achievement of communism. Only the Soviet Union, it was now recognized, was actually making the transition to the higher stage.

THE whole ideological framework in which the new seven-year plan was presented at the 21st Congress cannot be understood without reference to the dispute with the Chinese Communists. Because the latter claimed to have found a shortcut, the Russians were forced to elaborate immediately a doctrine of *their* road to communism, and in the process to revise more of Stalin's theoretical legacy. Because market exchanges and money are supposed to be replaced by organized distribution under communism, Stalin had in his last pamphlet envisaged the increasing replacement of the state purchase of collective-farm produce by organized barter. Khrushchev's agricultural reforms, however, had taken the opposite direction—they replaced deliveries in kind by state purchase, and kolkhoz peasant incomes in kind by cash advances. The fact that the Chinese seemed to go in the direction indicated by Stalin forced Khrushchev to state clearly the principle underlying his revision of Stalin's doctrine: there could, he said, be no communism without abundance, no abundance without high productivity, and no sure way of increasing production without "the yardstick of the ruble."

By the time of the 21st Congress, the Chinese challenge had already been withdrawn, and Khrushchev could respond with appropriate counter-concessions for the sake of unity. He recognized the usefulness of the communes in Chinese conditions or at any rate the right of the Chinese to try them, now that they had stopped claiming some higher universal meaning for that peculiar institution. Khrushchev also rejected the thesis developed during the critical phase by a Soviet philosopher, according to which the European nations would enter the realm of communism ahead of the Asian ones. He adopted instead the formula of another theorist, who last spring answered Yugoslav charges of Soviet "hegemonism" by claiming that within the "socialist world system," the backward members were being steadily helped to catch up with their more advanced brethren. Khrushchev's consoling conclusion was that while the Soviet Union was leading the way to communism, the goal would actually be reached by the whole family of Communist-ruled states together.

The fact remains that the Chinese challenge from without, as well as the pressure from within the CPSU, forced the Soviet leaders to elaborate their own doctrine of the road to communism, and this doctrine was bound to furnish not only promises of future technical progress and abundance, but a definite program for the further transformation of peasant agriculture. Khrushchev's report to the Congress contained this program; indeed, it is, from the point of

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view of internal Soviet developments, by far the most important part of the report.

Under the slogan of "bringing collective farm property closer together with state property" and preparing the way for the ultimate merging of both forms into a single form of public property, Khrushchev stressed the need for fostering four main processes. Three of these are concerned with state control of kolkhoz investment. The "indivisible fund," i.e. the part of kolkhoz revenue which, under statutory rules, must not be distributed among the members but reinvested, is to grow steadily. At the same time, joint investments of several collective farms or of collective farms and state authorities for major projects, ranging from processing plants and roadbuilding to electrification, are to become increasingly important. All this amounts to saying that the state, by making the kolkhozes finance local projects, will limit the growth of the peasants' incomes, which has been considerable in recent years compared to their abysmally low level under Stalin. Clearly the gradual growth of state control of the countryside can be achieved in this way without dangerous upheavals, provided the imposed investment quotas are not too high. Clearly, too, this control of the upper limits of incomes will make the position of the peasants more like that of workers receiving wages; and the introduction of the payment of regular cash advances in the more prosperous koklhozes will amount to a kind of guaranteed minimum wage.

More risky than the general method of imposing higher investment quotas on the collective farms is a particular application of this method mentioned by Khrushchev—the program of "radically improving rural cultural and welfare facilities," so as eventually to "convert the collective farm villages into modern urban-type settlements, supplied with all the latest municipal and cultural facilities." Despite its cautious wording, this is now recognized in the Soviet press to mean nothing less than a revival of Khrushchev's abortive 1951 project for resettling the kolkhoz peasants, following the amalgamation of the old village-based kolkhozes into larger units, in newly built "agrotowns." As Malenkov pointed out at the last party Congress held in Stalin's lifetime, it was absurd to dream of such grandiose schemes and allocate scarce materials to them while kolkhoz production was so low; the funds required would have had to be taken away from more urgent investment needs.

In the meantime, however, the amalgamation of collective farms into larger units has steadily continued, until now their total number has been reduced from a quarter of a million to less than seventy thousand; mechanization has improved and incomes have increased—with the result that Khrushchev can now demand that the peasants themselves finance the intended transformation of their lives. The process is to begin with such attractive steps as the building of central schools, libraries, baths, and kindergartens for the large collective farms comprising several villages, or the building of hostels for young, unmarried people who work in a branch of agriculture that takes them away from their home village—say, the communal dairy. But eventually a general resettlement of the peasant families themselves is to follow, and as Khrushchev pointed out in 1951, it will be both cheaper and more effective in breaking down peasant individualism if the opportunity is used to replace the traditional housing by collective apartment houses "of an urban type."

THE kind of peasant resistance which this particular form of "erasing the difference between town and country" may provoke is fairly obvious; Khrushchev himself in his Congress report was careful not to spell it out in detail, and the final resolution of the Congress did not even mention the point. Yet the very word "agrotown," so full of controversial implications since the earlier attempt, has begun to reappear in the Soviet press, in the form of occasional reports about the catching "enthusiasm" for the agrotown in particular collective farms. The reason is not simply that this is an old personal fad of Khrushchev's, but that peasant resettle-

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ment in new centers would be a decisive step in forcing through the most important —but also the most ticklish—kolkhoz change mentioned in his report: the elimination of the private plots still remaining to the kolkhoz peasants, and with that the sale of their privately owned animals, and in particular their cows, to the kolkhoz.

Here is the crux. When Stalin's forced collectivization led to the mass slaughter of cattle by the peasants in 1930, permission for the kolkhoz members to keep a private cow was the decisive concession made to save the country from famine. Ever since then, the peasant's cow has been sacred in the Soviet Union; and since the granting of incentive prices and the lowering and final abolition of delivery quotas from the private plots which followed Stalin's death, these cows have multiplied exceedingly—to the immense benefit of the Russian people. Official Soviet statistics have disclosed that in 1956, more than half the cows of the Soviet Union were still privately owned; and last December Khrushchev complained to the Central Committee that in a number of regions, which had increased milk and meat output, the greater part of the increase was again due to the peasants' private production! This, clearly, is no basis for "the higher stage of communism"; nor is it a good basis for raising the productivity of the livestock industry by the care of large herds in modern stables and with modern equipment.

Is Khrushchev, then, going to lay hands on the peasants' sacred cow? He clearly would like to, but he is also fully aware of the risk of a severe setback in production. His idea is that the peasant can now be *persuaded* to sell his cow to the kolkhoz, if the latter is sufficiently well equipped to provide him with milk as regularly and more cheaply, and to make more rewarding use of his wife's labor. In Kalinovka, Khrushchev's home-town farm near Kursk, which has been developed as a model kolkhoz, he himself did the persuading two years ago, and all the cows were sold to the collective; and he has propagated the example in a number of speeches since then. But oddly enough, every one of these speeches was quickly followed by a warning, also from Khrushchev, that persuasion is right and necessary, but that no pressure must be used in any circumstances—and there seem to have been more negative examples of forced sales of livestock than of "genuine" persuasion.

The 21st Congress did not resolve this dilemma. Khrushchev once again stressed the need for the kolkhozes to satisfy the requirements of their members not from the "unproductive" private plots, but from collective production, including collectively owned livestock. But he set no target date for the liquidation of the peasants' private holdings and did not sanction pressure; the final resolution of the Congress did not mention the subject at all. Since then, the press campaign about the advantages of selling cows to the kolkhoz has continued, including a graphic report about a cow-selling mass meeting in the same literary monthly which paved the way for the machine-tractor reform. But again, Khrushchev himself in mid-February rebuked officials in one of the most successful milk-producing regions for using pressure, and the warning was emphatically repeated in *Pravda* in March.

These, then, are the new problems of Khrushchev's Russia—the problems which the 21st Congress outlined but did not solve. The Soviet Communist leaders have given their followers a well-defined recipe of what is needed for "the building of communism" —but they have not told them how, with what means of pressure, and at what pace, to go about it. The contradiction between the party's doctrine of the permanent transformation of society according to a preconceived pattern, and the partly unfettered tendencies to natural growth of the peasant economy persist, and the party is conscious of them. But as its leaders are both unwilling and probably unable to overcome the contradictions by a return to Stalinist steamroller methods, they hesitate to give a clear-cut answer. That answer can only emerge from new conflicts—in the country and in the party.

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WHAT SHOULD OUR FOREIGN POLICY BE?

An Exchange

IN THE February COMMENTARY, H. STUART HUGHES advocated disengagement in Central Europe and a more imaginative approach to Asia and Africa as the basis of "A Politics of Peace." Here G. L. ARNOLD, British political analyst and author of *The Pattern of World Conflict,* enters several reservations, and Professor Hughes comments. Professor Hughes, a regular contributor, teaches history at Harvard; his most recent book is *Consciousness and Society* (1958).

G. L. Arnold: I have a feeling, which may be shared by some of your readers, that Mr. H. Stuart Hughes's thoughtful article in your February number ("A Politics of Peace") is likely to stimulate public discussion of the coexistence problem in the difficult months which lie ahead. It would be an excellent thing, in my opinion, if the debate moved along the lines he has sketched out, following (one presumes) the lead given earlier by Mr. George Kennan. There are, however, some *caveats* if one looks at the matter from the other side of the Atlantic. Since I happen to be largely in agreement with the position taken by Mr. Kennan and Professor Hughes, I trust my remarks will be viewed as "constructive criticism."

First of all, let us be sure that we do not confuse what is called disengagement with the end of the cold war. By now most people in the West favor a species of the former, at any rate with respect to Central Europe. Mr. Hughes is right in thinking that in Britain both official and public opinion is moving steadily in this direction, disappointment over the predictable failure of Mr. Macmillan's excursion to Moscow notwithstanding. He may be equally right in thinking that American policy is still "stuck fast on the old Adenauer line," though one gathers the impression that things have recently been moving in that quarter too. However, let us be careful not to overrate the importance of a German settlement, let alone a Berlin settlement. The coming showdown over Berlin *may* lead to some kind of military disengagement in Central Europe, after the super-powers have advanced close enough to the brink to satisfy the requirements of nuclear diplomacy; and disengagement *may* in turn produce a "neutralized" Germany, though scarcely a "unified" one. But this is to postpone the solution of the German problem, not to hasten it. *Pace* Mr. Hughes, there is no evidence that the Russians are "casting around for some face-saving device for divesting themselves of an almost worthless satellite." At least, if that is what they want, they are going about it the wrong way. On balance, the East German state seems unlikely to survive a genuine experiment in confederation with the Federal Republic, and in the end this may turn out to be the solution. But if this is the Kremlin's "reserve position," the price apparently is the dismantling of NATO; and NATO, however shaky it may be, is still the only shield Western Europe has got at the moment.

The logic of Mr. Hughes's—as of Mr. Kennan's—argument consequently leads to the neutralization of all Western Europe (and of Eastern Europe too, if that can be achieved). He has virtually said so, as has Walter Lippmann. Now I happen to believe that in the long run—by 1970 or thereabouts —something of this kind is going to come about: military technology and political pressures are both working toward this end. But if we are going to have to pay for the

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anticipated step-by-step disengagement in Central Europe by neutralizing the whole of Western Europe, while the Russians in their turn merely pull back from some of their outlying satellites, the balance is going to be turned against us. This is what some of the people who have their eyes glued on Berlin do not seem to realize. Berlin is the focus of the cold war, but the conflict concerns the whole of Europe, east and west. Unfortunately, two world wars have wrecked what was once called Central Europe—an area that included Hungary and Czechoslovakia—and caused an artificial split down the middle. The aim must be to render Western Europe reasonably safe by restoring the historic Central European buffer against Russian expansion, and this can only be done by inducing the Soviet forces to pull back from the satellite states—including Poland. For this even the dismantling of NATO in its present form might not be too high a price—technological progress permitting. But what evidence is there that the Russians are interested in such a bargain? I don't see any.

With Mr. Hughes's remarks about the weakening of the Communist drive in Western Europe I have no quarrel. It is true and important that the Communist party in France and Italy is on the decline—irremediably so. This makes it easier to envisage a viable "Europe of the Six," but the current tendency to shelter behind this sadly shrunken remnant of what was once called Europe has its dangers too. Satisfaction over the progress of West European integration can lead to a resigned acceptance of the 1945 settlement which handed the eastern half of the Continent over to Russia. Yet the Berlin crisis is a reminder that this settlement was arrived at by ignoring the underlying realities—mainly the impossibility of keeping Germany divided. It can be argued that the West missed certain opportunities in this field during the early 50's; that the price has now gone up partly through our fault; and that if we want a unified and neutralized Germany we must "disengage" more drastically than would have been the case, say, five years ago. But the price to be paid for our past follies must not be such as to undermine what is left of the Western position in Europe.

When one turns to the longer perspective, it is clear that Mr. Hughes envisages a global stalemate which will enable "a neutralized Europe" (does that include Eastern Europe?) to maintain a pose of non-involvement in the deadly rivalry of the two super-powers. This is the probable shape of things to come, and it is a good thing that the American public should be gradually prepared for it. Needless to say, this kind of global balance —plus interstellar rivalry?—can only be maintained if the United States is adequately armed. There is no need to pursue Mr. C. Wright Mills's amiable fantasy about the beneficial effects of one-sided disarmament: no one supposes that the United States is going to commit suicide. The immediate danger may lie in thinking that if only the ice can be broken in Europe, the political current will automatically flow in a more favorable direction. This would be true only if the Soviet government allowed its satellite empire to disintegrate, and in general abandoned the Stalinist perspective of an inevitable showdown between the super-powers at some uncertain date in the future. And of that there is no sign.

This brings me to Mr. Hughes's second theme: the problem of the so-called uncommitted areas. These are of course mainly what were once described as backward countries. It is now considered more polite to refer to them as "underdeveloped countries," though in point of fact some of them —Egypt, for example—have got into a mess through overdevelopment in respect of their basic material and human resources. (I explained the economics of this process some years ago in a book, *The Pattern of World Conflict*, which the "free enterprise" reviewers systematically ignored, though I am glad to say it was favorably noticed by Mr. Hughes in Commentary, February 1957.) Now I am in a quandary about his recommendations in this field: what he says about

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the socio-political trend in these countries is in accordance with my own views. I also subscribe wholeheartedly to his strictures on Western policies, including the folly of trying to export "free enterprise" (in its monopolistic form at that!) to these countries, some of which will certainly collapse or go Communist quite shortly if they do not adopt some very drastic central planning. But I fear he is being too optimistic when he suggests that Western – especially American – propaganda will do better by dwelling upon the more amiable features of our way of life. "We can begin to suggest," he writes, "that as a hard-working, *non-competitive* [his italics] society we have newly acquired virtues of our own whose very existence most foreigners scarcely suspect." We can indeed suggest such things, but what reason is there to believe that anyone would listen?

Having spent a very pleasant year in America I think I have an idea what Mr. Hughes has in mind when he refers to "the vast changes in our practices and attitudes. . . . the acceptance of the welfare state, the cult of gentleness and tolerance in personal and intergroup relations." These are also British virtues—they have made little impact on the bulk of nationalist opinion in Asia and Africa, outside a handful of genuinely Westernized intellectuals and labor leaders. It is necessary to be brutally frank on this subject: the only system admired in backward countries is one which guarantees a rapid growth of wealth and national power; and the only debate is over the best means of attaining this end. And as for the "cult of gentleness and tolerance," it should by now be common knowledge that the only European statesman who ever had a large and enthusiastic following in those parts was Hitler: not—or anyhow not in the main—because of his massacres (although these did him no harm) but because his personality and record appealed to what I am afraid is the dominant culture-complex in retrograde societies. On balance, however, Stalin was (and is) admired even more: not only did he kill even more people, but he had the merit of not being a Westerner, of being indeed an enemy of the West; also he was successful. To the dominant stratum in the uncommitted areas of Asia and Africa such considerations come first.

With these thoughts in mind, we should be skeptical of any suggestion that our position in the cold war can be significantly improved by propaganda dwelling upon our undoubted good qualities. One does not wish to be facetious about so serious a subject, but Professor Hughes's specifications do bring to mind the story of the British journalist in Mr. Macmillan's party who took a copy of *Lolita* with him to Moscow (only to have it confiscated at the airport), explaining rather sheepishly: "I thought it might take their minds off Little Nell." If it were only a matter of proving that we have outgrown the Dickensian horrors of early industrialism and become sophisticated, the battle would be won in an instant. Unfortunately the people who matter are not liberal intellectuals but tough-minded organizers to whom our virtues, real or supposed, make little appeal. Nor is it the case that their feelings have been bruised and stand in need of flattery, as some Americans seem to think. Political mountebanks like Nehru, Nasser, and Soekarno have had too much praise showered upon them for anyone in those parts to be scared of our supposed arrogance and toughness. We are not considered tough; we are regarded as flabby and half-witted—not without cause, when one thinks of the mental level of the average Western movie, television quiz, or newspaper comic. And as for the virtues of welfare economics: not only are they largely irrelevant to the problems of poor and overpopulated areas which require the most drastic surgical treatment; they do not even make an appeal to the bulk of the intelligentsia; a steel works or two (for use against one's neighbors) is rated more important than socialized medicine or the TVA. Is this cause for despair? Not necessarily. The people in question will eventually outgrow this stage. But they will not become liberals (or Fabian socialists)

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in our lifetime. As long as we remember this, criticism of Western policy along the lines suggested by Mr. Hughes in his article can only do good.

H. Stuart Hughes: My pleasure is much more than perfunctory in replying to a critic of Mr. Arnold's discernment: he is friendly; he understands everything that I was trying to say; he agrees with most of it; and he locates with precision the points in my argument where I myself was least sure. The best critic is always the one who acts as the author's own uneasy conscience.

As I read his remarks, Mr. Arnold has two main criticisms to offer, corresponding to the two areas, the European and the "underdeveloped," with which my article dealt. On the former, he finds me too confident of reaching a settlement of the German question satisfactory to both sides; on the latter, he taxes me with illusions as to the potential appeal of an American foreign policy oriented toward state welfare schemes. In brief, in both cases he reproaches me with undue optimism—a variant, at once kinder and more sophisticated than is usual in such cases, of the traditional charge of naivety that Europeans have so often directed against my fellow citizens.

Now Mr. Arnold may well be right about this—I am merely surprised to find myself assailed by the opposite charge from the one to which I have usually been subjected in my own country. We Americans have been trained from childhood to look on the positive side of things: the negative, the pessimistic, strike us as unhealthy emanations from the philosophic swamps of Europe. And it is for this reason that as a nation we have found it so difficult to arrive at a realistic conception of postwar foreign policy—we simply cannot believe that the alternatives before us are so circumscribed and the possibilities of favorable solutions so limited as a detached analysis would suggest. Hence even critics like Mr. Mills and myself, who try to be properly "tough-minded" about these things, find ourselves unable to resist the compulsion to offer something positive in the way of a program for peace.

I hope it was clear that a note of urgency and even of desperation underlay the whole approach in my article. The implication was that our country's situation was far worse than it appeared to be, and that it was time to cut our losses and to make the best bargain we could—in several parts of the world—before it was too late. With each month that passes, I am convinced, our bargaining power grows less, and the world power balance tips more heavily in our disfavor.

This is also the implication of what Mr. Arnold says—along with Walter Lippmann, George Kennan, and nearly all the more informed commentators on the international scene. Yet in each case the writer in question fails to push his pessimistic analysis to its ultimate conclusion; he finds some escape device or silver lining to temper the austerity of his deductions. These psychological comforts vary from commentator to commentator: Mr. Kennan vests his hope in the virtues of Central European disengagement—Mr. Arnold seeks his in the remaining strength of NATO. In each case, the difference is mainly a matter of emphasis. And the same is true of the specific points at issue between Mr. Arnold and myself.

Thus, as regards the formerly colonial nations of Asia and Africa, Mr. Arnold sees fewer chances for satisfactory relations with the new regimes than I do. If he detects a note of anti-colonial innocence in my statements, I find a tone of residual colonialist scorn in his. Surely it is unfair (and misleading) to group so diverse a trio of leaders as Nehru, Nasser, and Soekarno under the epithet "political mountebanks." (Like Mr. Arnold himself, I am going for the shakiest statement first.) The term is doubtless appropriate to the last of these, but for Nehru it is too harsh, and for Nasser not harsh enough. Against these one might well set up another trio—say, Bourguiba, Nkrumah, and Bandaranaike of Ceylon—who would be equally varied and rather more appealing to Western eyes. Indeed, it is precisely the

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enormous variety of political behavior and practice in the underdeveloped parts of the earth that offers the opening for an intelligently directed American policy. To lump all this together as simply a 20th-century non-European version of *Realpolitik* and to discount the infinite complexity of the racial and religious passions at work in Asia and Africa, would be to fall headlong into an error that is just the reverse of a sentimental anti-colonialism. Only the most flexible of policies, carefully attuned to the qualitative differences that distinguish each area and political movement from another, will enable us to steer successfully through the eddies of mass emotion which, as Mr. Arnold quite rightly suggests, will probably grow even more treacherous during the years to come.

But this is not the major issue between us. The question of Central Europe—and with it the fate of Europe as a whole—is obviously the core of our discussion. And this is more than ever true now that the crisis over Berlin, which was only at its inception when my article was written, has become the obsession that haunts us all. Let me grant two or three things right at the start: first, while I do not confuse disengagement with the end of the cold war, I do believe that the former would help to reduce international tension in general and, more particularly, the risks of an accidental explosion; second, on further consideration I find that my phrase about the Soviet leaders' "casting around for some face-saving device for divesting themselves of an almost worthless satellite" is overstated and hence misleading; finally, in the last few weeks I have detected several (to me) encouraging signs that we are getting ourselves unstuck from the Adenauer line.

Now the burden of these correctives and amplifications is that the crisis over Berlin has thrust upon us the problem of disengagement in Central Europe in an even more acute and embarrassing form than my article suggested. In the past few weeks it is I rather than Mr. Arnold who has become the pessimist. Where my earlier effort bespoke a certain unhurried detachment, today I find it difficult to write of these matters without a sense of threatening urgency. In brief, my article was couched in terms of a pre-crisis situation—a situation in which it was still possible to weigh the alternatives in relative calm free from the pressure of nuclear bluff or blackmail.

Many elements of the earlier situation remain: it is still to everyone's advantage to eliminate as far as possible the anomalies of a divided Germany and a divided Berlin, and to end the arming of the rival German forces that perpetuates this situation; it is still true that *in the abstract* most Europeans probably prefer disengagement and/or neutralization to the present uneasy truce. But the bluntness of the Russian tactics over Berlin and the threat of war that has accompanied them have understandably obscured the merits of the Soviet position, and aroused second thoughts as to the virtues of being left without American armed assistance. In these new circumstances it is well-nigh impossible to discuss the question coolly. At the same time the effort is more than ever imperative: once more the official word has gone out not to rock the boat in time of storm, and once more the leaders of the Democratic party have fallen into line or (like the formerly outspoken Senator Mansfield) been shamed into silence.

In choosing Berlin as their entering wedge, Khrushchev and his fellows demonstrated once again their talent for picking the vulnerable point in their adversary's line of defense. Berlin is not only exposed and surrounded—it is not only an international lawyer's nightmare—it is also the place where in the airlift of 1948-49 our country most dramatically (and successfully) proclaimed its intention of resisting further Soviet advances in Europe. Since that date we have been deeply committed to the West Berliners: we are pledged to go to their aid whatever happens. The Russians doubtless appreciate this fact at its full worth; they know that is our *personal* pledge to two million human beings that will have top priority in our minds in all future negotiations.

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This means that they have succeeded in reopening the Central European question as a whole—which was evidently what they wanted to do all along—under circumstances singularly favorable to themselves. Had we done the same sort of thing four or five years ago, rather than simply drifting along with Adenauer alone as our guide, the advantages would have been the other way around. At that time superiority in nuclear weapons still rested with us; NATO was a going concern, with the French only starting on their tragic involvement in the Algerian struggle; we did not yet have a de Gaulle to bedevil us and to strengthen Adenauer's hand; the Soviet and East German rulers, shaken by the outbreaks of 1953, had not yet recovered their nerve or begun to make any significant progress in raising their peoples' standard of living. But to negotiate on the German question in 1954 or 1955 would have required some sort of recognition of the Communist regime in the East—and this our government consistently refused even to discuss.

To these mistakes we added another when we let it be understood that the nuclear rearmament of the West Germans was only a matter of time. Most commentators seem to be agreed that it was this that touched off the Soviet resolve to reach a settlement in Central Europe at all costs. And so we are left with a situation in which nearly all the advantages we possessed four or five years ago have passed to our adversaries. It is quite correct to say, as Mr. Arnold does, that the Soviet "price" has "now gone up partly through our fault" and that if we want a settlement we will have to "'disengage' more drastically than would have been the case" a few years ago. In return for a concession to our view on Berlin—that is, an international guarantee of the livelihood and liberties of the West Berliners—the Russians are likely to insist on a similar guarantee of the economic system in East Germany, plus the departure of our own troops from Germany and of the West Germans from NATO. In short, to honor our pledge to Berlin—whose top priority is nonetheless real despite its almost wholly moral and sentimental character—we may have to give way on very nearly everything else that is at issue between us and the USSR.

I am sure that this statement will strike many people as excessively defeatist. And Mr. Arnold may think that I have conceded too high a price "for our past follies." Once again, however, I should like to recall something I said in my earlier article—that the bulk of these concessions would be no more than strategic withdrawals from positions whose untenability is now manifest, and that the federation and subsequent neutralization of the two Germanies would be at least as much in our interest as in that of the Soviet Union. It would also be well to remember that the alternative is nuclear war: our leaders have specifically ruled out the intermediate solution of a limited conflict.

Similarly, in the matter of what Mr. Arnold calls the "dismantling of NATO," it is important to look at the actual situation as opposed to the situation as it exists in theory. To be sure, the withdrawal of Western Germany both as a member country and as a military base would profoundly alter the nature of the Atlantic alliance. But it is my contention that that alliance has already changed beyond recognition. Virtually none of the conditions any longer exists that were responsible for its original character ten years ago.

At its inception NATO was conceived as a military coalition in the familiar European tradition, provided with sufficient *conventional* ground forces to act as a deterrent to Soviet expansion. For several years now this has no longer been the case: most of the French forces—originally the central element in the coalition's defenses—have been withdrawn to fight in Algeria, and the remaining NATO contingents have been supplied with nuclear warheads. These forces are currently serving more as a trip-wire for "massive retaliation" than as the potential soldiers of a regularly constituted ground engagement. And similarly in the political sphere: ten years ago the Europe-oriented policy of the Truman administration dovetailed admirably with the corresponding Europe-mindedness

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of Continental foreign ministers who as likely as not spoke the common language of Christian Democracy. Today this is all past history: the provincial nationalists of the Eisenhower administration confront the corresponding nationalism of de Gaulle; they still talk the language of Europe, but the words carry a profoundly different meaning from what they did a decade ago.

In the disintegration that NATO is currently experiencing, nationalism and neutralism reinforce each other. One is largely a conservative tendency, the other is characteristic of the democratic left, but they both in effect work against the NATO concept. So long as the France of de Gaulle remains absorbed in its nostalgia for past grandeur, so long as its eyes are riveted on its African "mission," its worth to the Atlantic alliance will be only marginal. And in Italy also the revival of democratic socialism that has been spurred on by Nenni's definitive break with the Communists logically entails a wholesale re-examination of the country's foreign policy. In Scandinavia the strength of neutralist sentiment is already of long standing. What is left? Britain and Canada, the Low Countries and Portugal, Greece and Turkey—a thing of shreds and patches.

And so we are down to the bedrock of American foreign policy—an Atlantic alliance in a narrower and more realistic sense, based on Britain and Canada. The diplomacy of the present juncture confirms it: Adenauer and de Gaulle follow one path, Eisenhower and Macmillan another. Indeed Americans of moderate and internationalist views in the current emergency are more and more turning to the British for guidance. It is too early to say whether we shall emerge from the present mess unscathed. But if we do so, it will be largely owing to the calm and good sense of our friendly critics from across the Atlantic.

FOR POP

ARTHUR RALPH GOLD

In Florida and not Jerusalem,
Being at last both prosperous and warm,
He has his most cantankerous last words.

And he is mourned by alien jungle birds,
Flamingoes, rusty-legged, that pace the lawn:
The cover on his parakeet is drawn.

A hole is dug for him by Africans.
Lament is made for him by some old men.
When healthy lights on bathing beaches dim,
They mourn themselves and Palestine
in him.

Arthur Ralph Gold here makes his first appearance in Commentary. He was born in New Jersey in 1935, and is currently a graduate student in English at Harvard.

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ELI, THE FANATIC

A Story

PHILIP ROTH

LEO TZUREF stepped out from back of a white column to welcome Eli Peck. Eli jumped back, surprised; then they shook hands and Tzuref gestured him into the sagging old mansion. At the door Eli turned, and down the slope of lawn, past the jungle of hedges, beyond the dark, untrampled horse path, he saw the street lights blink on in Woodenton. The stores along Coach House Road tossed up a burst of yellow—it came to Eli as a secret signal from his townsmen: "Tell this Tzuref where we stand, Eli. This is a modern community, Eli, we have our families, we pay taxes. . . ." Eli, burdened by the message, gave Tzuref a dumb weary stare.

"You must work a full day," Tzuref said, steering the attorney and his briefcase into the chilly hall.

Eli's heels made a racket on the cracked marble floor, and he spoke above it. "It's the commuting that's killing," he said, and entered the dim room Tzuref waved open for him. "Three hours a day . . . I came right from the train." He dwindled down into a harp-backed chair. He expected it would be deeper than it was and consequently jarred himself on the sharp bones of his seat. It woke him, this shiver of the behind, to his business. Tzuref, a bald shaggy-browed man who looked as if he'd once been very fat, sat back of an empty desk, halfway hidden, as though he were settled on the floor. Everything around him was empty. There were no books in the bookshelves, no rugs on the floor, no drapery in the big casement windows. As Eli began to speak Tzuref got up and swung a window back on one noisy hinge. "May and it's like August," he said, and with his back to Eli, he revealed the black circle on the back of his head. The crown of his head was missing! He returned through the dimness—the lamps had no bulbs—and Eli realized all he'd seen was a skullcap. Tzuref struck a match and lit a candle, just as the half-dying shouts of children at play rolled in from the open window. It was as though Tzuref had opened it so Eli could hear them.

"Aah, now," he said. "I received your letter."

Eli poised, waiting for Tzuref to swish open a drawer and remove the letter from his file. Instead the old man leaned forward onto his stomach, worked his hand into his pants pocket, and withdrew what appeared to be a week-old handkerchief. He uncrumpled it; he unfolded it; he ironed it on the desk with the side of his hand. "So," he said.

Eli pointed to the grimy sheet which he'd gone over word by word with his partners, Lewis and McDonnell. "I expected an answer," Eli said. "It's a week."

"It was so important, Mr. Peck, I knew you would come."

Some children ran under the open window and their mysterious babble—not mysterious to Tzuref, who smiled—entered the room like a third person. Their noise caught up against Eli's flesh and he was unable to restrain a shudder. He wished he had gone home, showered and eaten dinner, before calling on Tzuref. He was not feeling as professional as usual—the place was too dim, it was too late. But down in Woodenton they would be waiting, his clients and neighbors. He spoke for the Jews of Woodenton, not just himself and his wife.

"You understood?" Eli said.

"It's not hard."

"It's a matter of zoning. . . ." And when Tzuref did not answer, but only drummed his fingers on his lips, Eli said, "We didn't make the laws. . . ."

"You respect them."

PHILIP ROTH was born in Newark, N. J. and took his B.A. at Bucknell University and his M.A. at the University of Chicago. His sketch "You Can't Tell a Man by the Song He Sings" appeared in our November 1957 number. His work has also appeared in the *New Republic, Esquire,* and the *New Yorker.* "Eli, the Fanatic" will be included in *Goodbye, Columbus,* a selection of his fiction which Houghton Mifflin will publish next month.

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"They protect us . . . the community."

"The law is the law," Tzuref said.

"Exactly!" Eli had the urge to rise and walk about the room.

"And then of course,"—Tzuref made a pair of scales in the air with his hands—"the law is not the law. When is the law that is the law not the law?" He jiggled the scales. "And vice versa."

"Simply," Eli said sharply, "you can't have a boarding school in a residential area." He would not allow Tzuref to cloud the issue with issues. "We thought it better to tell you before any action is undertaken."

"But a house in a residential area?"

"Yes. That's what residential means." The foreigner's English was perhaps not as good as it seemed at first. Tzuref spoke slowly, but till then Eli had mistaken it for craft—or even wisdom. "Residence means home," he added.

"So this is my residence."

"But the children?"

"It is their residence."

"*Seventeen* children?"

"Eighteen."

"But you *teach* them here."

"The Talmud. That's illegal?"

"That makes it school."

Tzuref hung the scales again, tipping slowly the balance.

"Look, Mr. Tzuref, in America we call such a place a boarding school."

"Where they teach the Talmud?"

"Where they teach period. You are the headmaster, they are the students."

Tzuref placed his scales on the desk. "Mr. Peck," he said, "I don't believe it . . ." but he did not seem to be referring to anything Eli had said.

"Mr. Tzuref, that is the law. I came to ask what you intend to do."

"What I *must* do?"

"I hope they are the same."

"They are." Tzuref brought his stomach into the desk. "We stay." He smiled. "We are tired. The headmaster is tired. The students are tired."

Eli rose and lifted his brief case. It felt so heavy, packed with the grievances, vengeances, and schemes of his clients. There were days when he carried it like a feather—in Tzuref's office it weighed a ton.

"Goodbye, Mr. Tzuref."

"Shalom," Tzuref said.

Eli opened the door to the office and walked carefully down the dark tomb of a corridor to the door. He stepped out on the porch and, leaning against a pillar, looked down across the lawn to the children at play. Their voices whooped and rose and dropped as they chased each other round the old house. The dusk made the children's game look like a tribal dance. Eli straightened up, started off the porch, and suddenly the dance was ended. A long piercing scream trailed after. It was the first time in his life anyone had run at the sight of him. Keeping his eyes on the lights of Woodenton, he headed down the path.

And then, seated on a bench beneath a tree, Eli saw him. At first it seemed only a deep hollow of blackness—then the figure emerged. Eli recognized him from the description. There he was, wearing the hat, that hat which was the very cause of Eli's mission, the source of Woodenton's upset. The town's lights flashed their message once again: "Get the one with the hat. What a nerve, what a nerve. . . ."

Eli started towards the man. Perhaps he was less stubborn than Tzuref, more reasonable. After all, it was the law. But when he was close enough to call out, he didn't. He was stopped by the sight of the black coat that fell down below the man's knees, and the hands which held each other in his lap. By the round-topped, wide-brimmed Talmudic hat, pushed onto the back of his head. And by the beard, which hid his neck and was so soft and thin it fluttered away and back again with each heavy breath he took. He was asleep, his sidelocks curled loose on his cheeks. His face was no older than Eli's.

Eli hurried towards the lights.

The note on the kitchen table unsettled him. Scribblings on bits of paper had made history this past week. This one, however, was unsigned. "Sweetie," it said, "I went to sleep. I had a sort of Oedipal experience with the baby today. Call Ted Heller."

She had left him a cold soggy dinner in the refrigerator. He hated cold soggy dinners, but would take one gladly in place of Miriam's presence. He was ruffled, and she never helped that, not with her infernal analytic powers. He loved her when life was proceeding smoothly—and that was when she loved him. But sometimes Eli found being a lawyer surrounded him like quicksand—he couldn't get his breath. Too often he wished he were pleading for the other side; though if he were on the other side, then he'd wish he were on the side he was. Some-

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times the law didn't seem to be the answer, *law* didn't seem to have anything to do with what was aggravating everybody. And that made him feel foolish and unnecessary. . . . Though that was not the situation here—the townsmen had a case. But not *exactly,* and if Miriam were awake to see Eli's upset, she would set about explaining his distress to him, understanding him, forgiving him, so as to get things back to Normal, for Normal was where they loved one another. The difficulty with Miriam's efforts was they only upset him more; not only did they explain little to him about himself and his predicament, but they convinced him, sadly, of *her* weakness. Neither Eli nor Miriam, it turned out, was terribly strong. Twice before he'd faced this fact, and on both occasions had found solace in what his neighbors forgivingly referred to as "a nervous breakdown."

Eli ate his dinner with his brief case beside him. Halfway through, he gave in to himself, removed Tzuref's notes, and put them on the table, beside Miriam's. From time to time he flipped through the notes which had been carried into town by the one in the black hat. The first note, the incendiary:

To whom it may concern:
Please give this gentleman the following: Boys shoes with rubber heels and soles.

5 prs size 6c
3 prs size 5c
3 prs size 5b
2 prs size 4a
3 prs size 4c
1 pr size 7b
1 pr size 7c

Total, 18 prs. boys shoes. This gentleman has a check already signed. Please fill in correct amount.

L. Tzuref,
Director, Yeshivah of
Woodenton, NY.
(5/8/53)

"Eli, a regular greenhorn," Ted Heller had said. "He didn't say a word. Just handed me the note and stood there, like in the Bronx, the old guys who used to come around selling Hebrew trinkets."

"A Yeshivah!" Artie Berg had said. "Eli, in Woodenton, a Yeshivah! If I want to live in Brownsville, Eli, I'll live in Brownsville."

"Eli," Harry Shaw speaking now, "the old Puddington place. Old man Puddington'll roll over in his grave. Eli, when I left the city, Eli, I didn't plan the city should come to me."

Note number two:
Dear Grocer:

Please give this gentleman ten pounds of sugar. Charge it to our account—Yeshivah of Woodenton, NY—which we will now open with you and expect a bill each month. The gentleman will be in to see you once or twice a week.

L. Tzuref, Director
(5/10/53)

P.S. Do you carry kosher meat?

"He walked right by my window, the greenie," Ted had said, "and he *nodded,* Eli. He's my *friend* now."

"Eli," Artie Berg had said, "he handed the damn thing to a *clerk* at Stop an' Shop—and in that hat yet!"

"Eli," Harry Shaw again, "it's not funny. Someday, Eli, it's going to be a hundred little kids with little *yarmulkehs* chanting their Hebrew lessons on Coach House Road, and then it's not going to strike you funny."

"Eli, what goes on up there—my kids hear strange sounds."

"Eli, this is a modern community."

"Eli, we pay taxes."

"Eli."

"Eli!"

At first it was only another townsman crying in his ear; but when he turned he saw Miriam, standing in the doorway, behind her belly.

"Eli, sweetheart, how was it?"

"He said no."

"Did you see the other one?"

"Sleeping, under a tree."

"Did you let him know how people feel?"

"He was sleeping."

"Why didn't you wake him up? Eli, this isn't an everyday thing."

"He was tired!"

"Don't shout, please," Miriam said.

" 'Don't shout. I'm pregnant. The baby is heavy.' " Eli found he was getting angry at nothing she'd said yet; it was what she was going to say.

"He's a very heavy baby, the doctor says."

"Then sit *down* and make my dinner." Now he found himself angry about her not being present at the dinner which he'd just been relieved that she wasn't present at. It was as though he had a raw nerve for a tail, that he

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kept stepping on. At last Miriam herself stepped on it.

"Eli, you're upset. I understand."

"You *don't* understand."

She left the room. From the stairs she called, "I do, sweetheart."

It was a trap! He would grow angry knowing she would be "understanding." She would in turn grow more understanding seeing his anger. He would in turn grow angrier. . . . The phone rang.

"Hello," Eli said.

"Eli, Ted. So?"

"So nothing."

"Who is Tzuref? He's an American guy?"

"No. A DP. German."

"And the kids?"

"From Europe, too. He teaches them."

"What? What subjects?"

"I don't know."

"And the guy with the hat, you saw the guy with the hat?"

"Yes. He was sleeping."

"Eli, he sleeps with the *hat?*"

"He sleeps with the hat."

"Goddam fanatics," Ted said. "This is the 20th century, Eli. Now it's the guy with the hat. Pretty soon all the little Yeshivah boys'll be spilling down into town."

"Next thing they'll be after our daughters."

"Michele and Debbie wouldn't look at them."

"Then," Eli mumbled, "you've got nothing to worry about, Teddie," and he hung up.

In a moment the phone rang. "Eli? We got cut off. We've got nothing to worry about? You worked it out?"

"I have to see him again tomorrow. We can work something out."

"That's fine, Eli. I'll call Artie and Harry."

Eli hung up.

"I thought you said *nothing* worked out." It was Miriam.

"I did."

"Then why did you tell Ted *something* worked out?"

"It did."

"Eli, maybe you should get a little more therapy."

"That's enough of that, Miriam."

"You can't function as a lawyer by being neurotic. That's no answer."

"You're ingenious, Miriam."

She turned, frowning, and took her heavy baby to bed.

The phone rang.

"Eli, Artie. Ted called. You worked it out? No trouble?"

"Yes."

"When are they going?"

"Leave it to me, will you, Artie? I'm tired. I'm going to sleep."

IN BED Eli kissed his wife's belly and laid his head upon it to think. He laid it lightly for she was that day entering the second week of her ninth month. Still, when she slept, it was a good place to rest, to rise and fall with her breathing and figure things out. "If that guy would take off that crazy hat. . . . I know it, what eats them. If he'd just take off that crazy hat everything would be all right."

"What?" Miriam said.

"I'm talking to the baby."

Miriam pushed herself up in bed. "Eli, please, baby, shouldn't you maybe stop in to see Dr. Eckman, just for a little conversation?"

"I'm fine."

"Oh, sweetie!" she said, and put her head back on the pillow.

"You know what your mother brought to this marriage—a sling chair and a goddam New School enthusiasm for Sigmund Freud."

Miriam feigned sleep, he could tell by the breathing.

"I'm telling the kid the truth, aren't I, Miriam? A sling chair, three months to go on a *New Yorker* subscription, and *An Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. Isn't that right?"

"Eli, must you be aggressive?"

"That's all you worry about, is your insides. You stand in front of the mirror all day and look at yourself being pregnant."

"Pregnant mothers have a relationship with the foetus that fathers can't understand."

"Relationship my ass. What is my liver doing now? What is my small intestine doing now? Is my Island of Langerhans on the blink?"

"Don't be jealous of a little foetus, Eli."

"I'm jealous of your Island of Langerhans!"

"Eli, I can't argue with you when I know it's not me you're really angry with. Don't you see, sweetie, you're angry with yourself."

"You and Eckman."

"Maybe he could help, Eli."

"Maybe he could help you. You're practically lovers as it is."

"You're being hostile again," Miriam said.

"What do you care—it's only *me* I'm being hostile towards."

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"Eli, we're going to have a beautiful baby, and I'm going to have a perfectly simple delivery, and you're going to make a fine father, and there's absolutely no reason to be obsessed with whatever is on your mind. All we have to worry about—" she smiled at him, "—is a name."

Eli got out of bed and slid into his slippers. "We'll name the kid Eckman if it's a boy and Eckman if it's a girl."

"Eckman Peck sounds terrible."

"He'll have to live with it," Eli said, and he went down to his study where the latch on his brief case glinted in the moonlight that came through the window.

He removed the Tzuref notes and read through them all again. It unnerved him to think of all the flashy reasons his wife could come up with for his reading and re-reading the notes. "Eli, why are you so *preoccupied* with Tzuref?" "Eli, stop getting *involved*. Why do you think you're getting *involved*, Eli?" Sooner or later, everybody's wife finds their weak spot. His goddam luck he had to be neurotic! Why couldn't he have been born with a short leg.

He removed the cover from his typewriter, hating Miriam for the edge she had. All the time he wrote the letter, he could hear what she would be saying about his not being *able* to let the matter drop. Well, her trouble was that she wasn't *able* to face the matter. But he could hear that answer already: clearly, he was guilty of "a reaction-formation." Still, all the fancy phrases didn't fool Eli: all she wanted really was for Eli to send Tzuref and family on their way, so that the community's temper would quiet and the calm circumstances of their domestic happiness return. All she wanted was order and love in her private world. Was she so wrong? Let the world bat its brains out—in Woodenton there should be peace. He wrote the letter anyway:

Dear Mr. Tzuref:

Our meeting this evening seems to me inconclusive. I don't think there's any reason for us not to be able to come up with some sort of compromise that will satisfy the Jewish community of Woodenton and the Yeshivah and yourself. It seems to me that what most disturbs my neighbors are the visits to town by the gentleman in the black hat, suit, etc. Woodenton is a progressive suburban community whose members, both Jewish and Gentile, are anxious that their families live in comfort and beauty and serenity. This is, after all, the 20th century, and we do not think it too much to ask that the members of our community dress in a manner appropriate to the time and place.

Woodenton, as you may not know, has long been the home of well-to-do Protestants. It is only since the war that Jews have been able to buy property here, and for Jews and Gentiles to live beside each other in amity. For this adjustment to be made, both Jews and Gentiles alike have had to give up some of their more extreme practices in order not to threaten or offend the other. Certainly such amity is to be desired. Perhaps if such conditions had existed in pre-war Europe, the persecution of the Jewish people, of which you and those 18 children have been victims, could not have been carried out with such success—in fact, might not have been carried out at all.

Therefore, Mr. Tzuref, will you accept the following conditions. If you can, we will see fit not to carry out legal action against the Yeshivah for failure to comply with township zoning ordinances Nos. 18 and 23. The conditions are simply:

1. The religious, educational, and social activities of the Yeshivah of Woodenton will be confined to the Yeshivah grounds.

2. Yeshivah personnel are welcomed in the streets and stores of Woodenton provided they are attired in clothing usually associated with American life in the 20th century.

If these conditions are met, we see no reason why the Yeshivah of Woodenton cannot live peacefully and satisfactorily with the Jews of Woodenton—as the Jews of Woodenton have come to live with the Gentiles of Woodenton. I would appreciate an immediate reply.

Sincerely,
Eli Peck, Attorney

Two days later Eli received his immediate reply:

Mr. Peck:

The suit the gentleman wears is all he's got.

Sincerely,
Leo Tzuref, Headmaster

ONCE again, as Eli swung around the dark trees and onto the lawn, the children fled. He reached out with his brief case as if to stop them, but they were gone so fast all he saw moving was a flock of skullcaps.

"Come, come . . ." a voice called from the porch. Tzuref appeared from behind a pillar.

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Did he *live* behind those pillars? Was he just watching the children at play? Either way, when Eli appeared, Tzuref was ready, with no forewarning.

"Hello," Eli said.

"Shalom."

"I didn't mean to frighten them."

"They're scared, so they run."

"I didn't do anything."

Tzuref shrugged. The little movement seemed to Eli strong as an accusation. What he didn't get at home, he got here.

Inside the house they took their seats. Though it was lighter than a few evenings before, a bulb or two would have helped. Eli had to hold his brief case toward the window for the last gleamings. He removed Tzuref's letter from a manila folder. Tzuref removed Eli's letter from his pants' pocket. Eli removed the carbon of his own letter from another manila folder. Tzuref removed Eli's first letter from his back pocket. Eli removed the carbon from his brief case. Tzuref raised his palms. "It's all I've got. . . ."

Those upraised palms, the mocking tone—another accusation! It was a crime to keep carbons! Everybody had an edge on him—Eli could do no right.

"I offered a compromise, Mr. Tzuref. You refused."

"Refused, Mr. Peck? What is, is."

"The man could get a new suit."

"That's all he's got."

"So you told me," Eli said.

"So I told you, so you know."

"It's not an insurmountable obstacle, Mr. Tzuref. We have stores."

"For that too?"

"On Route 12, a Robert Hall—"

"To take away the one thing a man's got?"

"Not take away, *replace*."

"But I tell you he has nothing. *Nothing*. You have that word in English? *Nicht? Gornisht?*"

"Yes, Mr. Tzuref, we have the word."

"A mother and a father?" Tzuref said. "No. A wife? No. A baby? A little ten-month-old baby? No! A village full of friends? A synagogue where you knew the feel of every seat under your pants? Where with your eyes closed you could smell the cloth of the Torah?" Tzuref pushed out of his chair, stirring a breeze that swept Eli's letter to the floor. At the window he leaned out, and looked, beyond Woodenton. When he turned he was shaking a finger at Eli. "And a medical experiment they performed on him yet! That leaves nothing, Mr. Peck. Absolutely nothing!"

"I misunderstood."

"No news reached Woodenton?"

"About the suit, Mr. Tzuref. I thought he couldn't afford another."

"He can't."

They were right where they'd begun. "Mr. Tzuref!" Eli demanded. *"Here?"* He smacked his hand to his billfold.

"Exactly!" Tzuref said, smacking his own breast.

"Then we'll buy him one!" Eli crossed to the window and taking Tzuref by the shoulders, pronounced each word slowly. "We-will-pay-for-it. All right?"

"Pay? What, diamonds?"

Eli raised a hand to his inside pocket, then let it drop. Oh stupid! Tzuref, father to eighteen, had smacked not what lay under his coat, but deeper, under the ribs.

"Oh. . . ." Eli said. He moved away along the wall. "The suit is all he's got then."

"You got my letter," Tzuref said.

Eli stayed back in the shadow, and Tzuref turned to his chair. He swished Eli's letter from the floor, and held it up. "You say too much . . . all this reasoning . . . all these conditions. . . ."

"What can I do?"

"You have the word suffer in English?"

"We have the word suffer. We have the word law too."

"Stop with the law! You have the word suffer. Then try it. It's a little thing."

"They won't," Eli said.

"But you, Mr. Peck, how about you?"

"I am them, they are me, Mr. Tzuref."

"Aach! You are us, we are you!"

Eli shook and shook his head. In the dark he suddenly felt that Tzuref might put him under a spell. "Mr. Tzuref, a little light?"

Tzuref lit what tallow was left in the holders. Eli was afraid to ask if they couldn't afford electricity. Maybe candles were all they had left.

"Mr. Peck, who made the law, may I ask you that?"

"The people."

"No," Tzuref said.

"Yes."

"Before the people."

"No one. Before the people there was no law." Eli didn't care for the conversation, but

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with only candlelight, he was being lulled into it.

"Wrong," Tzuref said.

"We make the law, Mr. Tzuref. It is our community. These are my neighbors. I am their attorney. They pay me. Without law there is chaos."

"What you call law, I call shame. The heart, Mr. Peck, the heart is law! God!" he announced.

"Look, Mr. Tzuref, I didn't come here to talk metaphysics. People use the law, it's a flexible thing. They protect what they value, their property, their well-being, their happiness—"

"Happiness? They hide their shame. And you, Mr. Peck, you are shameless?"

"We do it," Eli said, wearily, "for our children. This is the 20th century. . . ."

"For the goyim maybe. For me the 57th." He pointed at Eli. "That is too old for shame."

Eli felt squashed. Everybody in the world had evil reasons for his actions. Everybody! With reasons so cheap, who buys bulbs. "Enough wisdom, Mr. Tzuref. Please. I'm exhausted."

"Who isn't?" Tzuref said.

He picked Eli's papers from his desk and reached up with them. "What do you intend for us to do?"

"What you must," Eli said. "I made the offer."

"So he must give up his suit?"

"Tzuref, Tzuref, leave me be with that suit! I'm not the only lawyer in the world. I'll drop the case, and you'll get somebody who won't talk compromise. Then you'll have no home, no children, nothing. Only a lousy black suit! Sacrifice what you want. I know what I would do."

To that Tzuref made no answer, but only handed Eli his letters.

"It's not me, Mr. Tzuref, it's them."

"They are you."

"No," Eli intoned, "I am me. They are them. You are you."

"You talk about leaves and branches. I'm dealing with under the dirt."

"Mr. Tzuref, you're driving me crazy with Talmudic wisdom. This is that, that is the other thing. Give me a straight answer."

"Only for straight questions."

"Oh, God!"

Eli returned to his chair and plunged his belongings into his case. "Then, that's all," he said, angrily.

Tzuref gave him the shrug.

"Remember, Tzuref, you called this down on yourself."

"*I* did?"

Eli refused to be his victim again. Double-talk proved nothing.

"Goodbye," he said.

But as he opened the door leading to the hall, he heard Tzuref. "And your wife, how is she?"

"Fine, just fine." Eli kept going.

"And the baby is due when, any day?"

Eli turned. "That's right."

"Well," Tzuref said, rising, "good luck."

"You know?"

Tzuref pointed out the window—then, with his hands, he drew upon himself a beard, a hat, a long, long coat. When his fingers formed the hem they touched the floor. "He shops two, three times a week, he gets to know them."

"He *talks* to them?"

"He sees them."

"And he can tell which is my wife?"

"They shop at the same stores. He says she is beautiful. She has a kind face. A woman who might even be capable of love. . . ."

"*He* talks about *us,* to *you?*" demanded Eli.

"You talk about us, to her?"

"Goodbye, Mr. Tzuref."

Tzuref said, "Shalom. And good luck—I know what it is to have children. Shalom," Tzuref whispered, and with the whisper the candles went out. But the instant before, the flames leaped into Tzuref's eyes, and Eli saw it was not luck Tzuref wished him at all.

Outside the door, Eli waited. Down the lawn the children were holding hands and whirling around in a circle. At first he did not move. But he could not hide in the shadows all night. Slowly he began to slip along the front of the house. Under his hands he felt where bricks were out. He moved in the shadows until he reached the side. And then, clutching his brief case to his chest, he broke across the darkest spots of the lawn. He aimed for a distant glade of woods, and when he reached it he did not stop, but ran through until he was so dizzied that the trees seemed to be running beside him, fleeing not towards Woodenton but away. His lungs were nearly ripping their seams as he burst into the yellow glow of the Gulf station at the edge of town.

"ELI, I had pains today. Where were you?"

"I went to Tzuref."

"Why didn't you call? I was worried."

He tossed his hat past the sofa and onto the

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floor. "Where are my winter suits?"

"In the hall closet. Eli, it's May."

"I need a strong suit." He left the room, Miriam behind him.

"Eli, talk to me. Sit down. Have dinner. Eli, what are you doing? You're going to get moth balls all over the carpet."

He peered out from the hall closet. Then he peered in again—there was a zipping noise, and suddenly he swept a greenish tweed suit before his wife's eyes.

"Eli, I love you in that suit. But not now. Have something to eat. I made you dinner tonight—I'll warm it."

"You've got a box big enough for this suit?"

"I got a Bonwit's box, the other day. Eli, *why?*"

"Miriam, you see me doing something, let me do it."

"You haven't eaten."

"I'm *doing* something." He started up the stairs to the bedroom.

"Eli, would you please tell me what it is you want, and why?"

He turned and looked down at her. "Suppose this time you give me the reasons *before* I tell you what I'm doing. It'll probably work out the same anyway."

"Eli, I want to help."

"It doesn't concern you."

"But I want to help *you*."

"Just be quiet, then."

"But you're upset," she said, and she followed him up the stairs, heavily, breathing for two.

"Eli, what now?"

"A shirt." He yanked open all the drawers of their new teak dresser. He extracted a shirt.

"Eli, batiste? With a tweed suit?" she inquired.

He was at the closet now, on his knees. "Where are my cordovans?"

"Eli, why are you doing this so compulsively? You look like you *have* to do something."

"Oh, Miriam, you're super subtle."

"Eli, stop this and talk to me. Stop it or I'll call Dr. Eckman."

Eli was kicking off the shoes he was wearing. "Where's the Bonwit box?"

"Eli, do you want me to have the baby right *here!*"

Eli walked over and sat down on the bed. He was draped not only with his own clothing, but also with the greenish tweed suit, the batiste shirt, and under each arm, a shoe. He raised his arms and let the shoes drop onto the bed. Then he undid his necktie with one hand and his teeth and added that to the booty.

"Underwear," he said. "He'll need underwear."

"Who!"

He was slipping out of his socks.

Miriam kneeled down and helped him ease his left foot out of the sock. She sat with it on the floor. "Eli, just lie back. Please."

"Plaza 9-3103."

"What?"

"Eckman's number," he said. "It'll save you the trouble."

"Eli—"

"You've got that goddam tender 'You need help' look in your eyes, Miriam, don't tell me you don't."

"I don't."

"I'm not flipping," Eli said.

"I know, Eli."

"Last time I sat in the bottom of the closet and chewed on my bedroom slippers. That's what I did."

"I know."

"And I'm not doing that. This is not a nervous breakdown, Miriam, let's get that straight."

"Okay," Miriam said. She kissed the foot she held. Then, softly, she asked, "What *are* you doing?"

"Getting clothes for the guy in the hat. Don't tell me why, Miriam. Just let me do it."

"That's all?" she asked.

"That's all."

"You're not leaving?"

"No."

"Sometimes I think it gets too much for you, and you'll just leave."

"What gets too much?"

"I don't *know*, Eli. Something gets too much. Whenever everything's peaceful for a long time, and things are nice and pleasant, and we're expecting to be even happier. Like now. It's as if you don't think we *deserve* to be happy."

"Damn it, Miriam! I'm giving this guy a new suit, is that all right? From now on he comes into Woodenton like everybody else, is that all right with you?"

"And Tzuref moves?"

"I don't even know if he'll take the suit, Miriam! Why do you have to bring up moving!"

"Eli, I didn't bring up moving. Everybody

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did. That's what everybody wants. Why make everybody un*happy*. It's even a law, Eli."

"Don't tell me what's the law."

"All right, sweetie. I'll get the box."

"*I'll* get the box. Where is it?"

"In the basement."

When he came up from the basement, he found all the clothes neatly folded and squared away on the sofa: shirt, tie, shoes, socks, underwear, belt, and an old gray flannel suit. His wife sat on the end of the sofa, looking like an anchored balloon.

"Where's the green suit?" he said.

"Eli, it's your loveliest suit. It's my favorite suit. Whenever I think of you, Eli, it's in that suit."

"Get it out."

"Eli, it's a Brooks Brothers suit. You say yourself how much you love it."

"Get it out."

"But the gray flannel's more practical. For shopping."

"Get it out."

"You go overboard, Eli. That's your trouble. You won't do anything in moderation. That's how people destroy themselves."

"I do *everything* in moderation. That's my trouble. The suit's in the closet again?"

She nodded, and began to fill up with tears. "Why does it have to be *your* suit? Who are you even to decide to give a suit? What about the others?" She was crying openly, and holding her belly. "Eli, I'm going to have a baby. Do we need all *this*?" and she swept the clothes off the sofa to the floor.

At the closet Eli removed the green suit. "It's a J. Press," he said, looking at the lining.

"I hope to hell he's happy with it!" Miriam said, sobbing.

A half hour later the box was packed. The cord he'd found in the kitchen cabinet couldn't keep the outfit from popping through. The trouble was there was too much: the gray suit *and* the green suit, an oxford shirt as well as the batiste. But let him have two suits! Let him have three, four, if only this damn silliness would stop. And a hat—of course! God, he'd almost forgotten the hat. He took the stairs two at a time and in Miriam's closet yanked a hat box from the top shelf. Scattering hat and tissue paper to the floor, he returned downstairs, where he packed away the hat he'd worn that day. Then he looked at his wife, who lay outstretched on the floor before the fireplace. For the third time in as many minutes she was saying, "Eli, this is the real thing."

"Where?"

"Right under the baby's head, like somebody's squeezing oranges."

Now that he'd stopped to listen he was stupefied. He said, "But you have two more weeks. . . ." Somehow he'd really been expecting it was to go on not just another two weeks, but another nine months. This led him to suspect, suddenly, that his wife was feigning pain to get his mind off delivering the suit. Just as suddenly he resented himself for having such a thought. God, what had he become! He'd been an awful bastard toward her since this Tzuref business had come up—just when her pregnancy must have been most burdensome. He'd allowed her no access to him—but still, he was sure, for good reasons: she might tempt him out of his confusion with her easy answers. He could be tempted all right, it was why he fought so hard. But now a sweep of love came over him at the thought of her contracting womb, and his child. And yet he would not indicate it to her. Under such splendid marital conditions, who knows but she might extract some promise from him about his concern with the school on the hill.

HAVING packed his second bag of the evening, Eli sped his wife to Woodenton Memorial. There she proceeded not to have her baby, but to lie hour after hour through the night having at first oranges, then bowling balls, then basketballs, squeezed back of her pelvis. Eli sat in the waiting room, under the shattering African glare of a dozen rows of fluorescent bulbs, composing a letter to Tzuref.

Dear Mr. Tzuref:

The clothes in this box are for the gentleman in the hat. In a life of sacrifice what is one more? But in a life of no sacrifices even one is impossible. Do you see what I'm saying, Mr. Tzuref? I am not a Nazi who would drive 18 children, who are probably frightened at the sight of a firefly, into homelessness. But if you want a home here, you must accept what we have to offer. The world is the world, Mr. Tzuref. As you would say, what is, is. All we say to this man is change your clothes. Enclosed are two suits and two shirts, and everything else he'll need, including a new hat. When he needs new clothes let me know.

We await his appearance in Woodenton, as we await friendly relations with the Yeshivah of Woodenton.

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He signed his name and slid the note under a bursting flap and into the box. Then he went to the phone at the end of the room and dialed Ted Heller's number.

"Hello."

"Shirley, it's Eli."

"Eli, we've been calling all night. The lights are on in your place, but nobody answers. We thought it was burglars."

"Miriam's having the baby."

"At home?" Shirley said. "Oh, Eli, what a fun idea!"

"Shirley, let me speak to Ted."

After the ear-shaking clatter of the phone whacking the floor, Eli heard footsteps, breathing, throat clearing, then Ted. "A boy or a girl?"

"Nothing yet."

"You've given Shirley the bug, Eli. Now she's going to have *our* next one at home."

"Good."

"That's a terrific way to bring the family together, Eli."

"Look, Ted, I've settled with Tzuref."

"When are they going?"

"They're not exactly going, Teddie. I settled it—you won't even know they're there."

"A guy dressed like 1000 B.C. and I won't know it? What are you thinking about, pal?"

"He's changing his clothes."

"Yeah, to what? Another funeral suit?"

"Tzuref promised me, Ted. Next time he comes to town, he comes dressed like you and me."

"What! Somebody's kidding somebody, Eli."

Eli's voice shot up. "If he says he'll do it, he'll do it!"

"And, Eli," Ted asked, "he said it?"

"He said it." It cost him a sudden headache, this invention.

"And suppose he doesn't change, Eli. Just suppose. I mean that *might* happen, Eli. This might just be some kind of stall or something."

"No," Eli assured him.

The other end was quiet a moment. "Look, Eli," Ted said, finally, "he changes. Okay? All right? But they're still up there, aren't they? *That* doesn't change."

"The point is you won't know it."

Patiently, Ted said, "Is this what we asked of you, Eli? When we put our faith and trust in you, is that what we were asking? We weren't concerned that this guy should become a Beau Brummel, Eli, believe me. We just don't think this is the community for them. And, Eli, we isn't me. The Jewish members of the community appointed me, Artie, and Harry to see what could be done. And we appointed you. And what's happened?"

Eli heard himself say, "What happened, happened."

"Eli, you're talking in crossword puzzles."

"My wife's having a baby," Eli explained, defensively.

"I realize that, Eli. But this is a matter of zoning, isn't it? Isn't that what we discovered? You don't abide by the ordinance, you go. I mean I can't raise mountain goats, say, in my backyard—"

"This isn't so simple, Ted. People are involved—"

"People? Eli, we've been through this and through this. We're not just dealing with people—these are religious fanatics is what they are. Dressing like that. What I'd really like to find out is what goes on up there. I'm getting more and more skeptical, Eli, and I'm not afraid to admit. It smells like a lot of hocus-pocus abracadabra stuff to me. Guys like Harry, you know, they think and they think and they're afraid to admit what they're thinking. I'll tell you. Look, I don't even know about this Sunday school business. Sundays I drive my oldest kid all the way to Scarsdale to learn Bible stories . . . and you know what she comes up with? This Abraham in the Bible was going to kill his own *kid* for a sacrifice. She gets nightmares from it, for God's sake! You call that religion? Today a guy like that they'd lock him up. This is an age of science, Eli. I size people's feet with an X-ray machine, for God's sake. They've disproved all that stuff, Eli, and I refuse to sit by and watch it happening on my own front lawn."

"Nothing's happening on your front lawn, Teddie. You're exaggerating, nobody's sacrificing their kid."

"You're damn right, Eli—I'm not sacrificing mine. You'll see when you have your own what it's like. All the place is, is a hideaway for people who can't face life. It's a matter of *needs*. They have all these superstitions, and why do you think? Because they can't face the world, because they can't take their place in society. That's no environment to bring kids up in, Eli."

"Look, Ted, see it from another angle. We can convert them," Eli said, with half a heart.

"What, make a bunch of Catholics out of them? Look, Eli—pal, there's a good healthy relationship in this town because it's modern

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Jews and Protestants. That's the point, isn't it, Eli? Let's not kid each other, I'm not Harry. The way things are now are fine—like human beings. There's going to be no pogroms in Woodenton. Right? 'Cause there's no fanatics, no crazy people—" Eli winced, and closed his eyes a second—"just people who respect each other, and leave each other be. Common sense is the ruling thing, Eli. I'm for common sense. Moderation."

"Exactly, exactly, Ted. I agree, but common sense, maybe, says make this guy change his clothes. Then maybe—"

"Common sense says that? Common sense says to me they go and find a nice place somewhere else, Eli. New York is the biggest city in the world, it's only 30 miles away—why don't they go there?"

"Ted, give them a chance. Introduce them to common sense."

"Eli, you're dealing with *fanatics*. Do they display common sense? Talking a dead language, that makes sense? Making a big thing out of suffering, so you're going oy-oy-oy all your life, that's common sense? Look, Eli, we've been through all this. I don't know if you know—but there's talk that *Life* magazine is sending a guy out to the Yeshivah for a story. With pictures."

"Look, Teddie, you're letting your imagination get inflamed. I don't think *Life's* interested."

"But I'm interested, Eli. And we thought you were supposed to be."

"I am," Eli said, "I am. Let him just change the clothes, Ted. Let's see what happens."

"They live in the medieval ages, Eli—it's some superstition, some *rule*."

"Let's just *see*," Eli pleaded.

"Eli, every day—"

"One more day," Eli said. "If he doesn't change in one more day. . . ."

"What?"

"Then I get an injunction first thing Monday. That's that."

"Look, Eli—it's not up to me. Let me call Harry—"

"You're the spokesman, Teddie. I'm all wrapped up here with Miriam having a baby. Just give me the day—them the day."

"All right, Eli. I want to be fair. But tomorrow, that's all. Tomorrow's the judgment day, Eli, I'm telling you."

"I hear trumpets," Eli said, and hung up. He was shaking inside—Teddie's voice seemed to have separated his bones at the joints. He was still in the phone booth when the nurse came to tell him that Mrs. Peck would positively not be delivered of a child until the morning. He was to go home and get some rest, he looked like *he* was having the baby. The nurse winked and left.

But Eli did not go home. He carried the Bonwit box out into the street with him and put it in the car. The night was soft and starry, and he began to drive the streets of Woodenton. Square cool windows, apricot-colored, were all one could see beyond the long lawns that fronted the homes of the townsmen. The stars polished the permanent baggage carriers atop the station wagons in the driveways. He drove slowly, up, down, around. Only his tires could be heard taking the gentle curves in the road.

What peace. What incredible peace. Have children ever been so safe in their beds? Parents—Eli wondered—so full in their stomachs? Water so warm in its boilers? Never. Never in Rome, never in Greece. Never even did walled cities have it so good! No wonder then they would keep things just as they were. Here, after all, were peace and safety—what civilization had been working toward for centuries. For all his jerkiness, that was all Ted Heller was asking for, peace and safety. It was what his parents had asked for in the Bronx, and his grandparents in Poland, and theirs in Russia or Austria, or wherever else they'd fled to or from. It was what Miriam was asking for. And now they had it—the world was at last a place for families, even Jewish families. After all these centuries, maybe there just had to be this communal toughness—or numbness—to protect such a blessing. Maybe that was the trouble with the Jews all along—too soft. Sure, to live takes guts . . . Eli was thinking as he drove on beyond the train station, and parked his car at the darkened Gulf station. He stepped out, carrying the box.

At the top of the hill one window trembled with light. What *was* Tzuref doing up there in that office? Killing babies—probably not. But studying a language no one understood? Practicing customs with origins long forgotten? Suffering sufferings already suffered once too often? Teddie was right—why keep it up! However, if a man chose to be stubborn, then he couldn't expect to survive. The world is give-and-take. What sense to sit and brood over a suit. Eli would give him one last chance.

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He stopped at the top. No one was around. He walked slowly up the lawn, setting each foot into the grass, listening to the shh shhh shhhh his shoes made as they bent the wetness into the sod. He looked around. Here there was nothing. Nothing! An old decaying house —and a suit. . . .

On the porch he slid behind a pillar. He felt someone was watching him. But only the stars gleamed down. And at his feet, off and away, Woodenton glowed up. He set his package on the step of the great front door. Inside the cover of the box he felt to see if his letter was there. When he touched it, he pushed it deeper into the green suit, which his fingers still remembered from winter. He should have included some light bulbs. He slid back by the pillar again, and this time there was something on the lawn. It was the second sight he had of him. He was facing Woodenton and barely moving across the open space towards the trees. His right fist was beating his chest. And then Eli heard a sound rising with each knock on the chest. What a moan! It could raise hair, stop hearts, water eyes. And it did all three to Eli, plus more. Some feeling crept into him for whose deepness he could find no word. It was strange. He listened—it did not hurt to hear this moan. He wondered if it hurt to make it. And so, with only stars to hear, he tried. And it did hurt. Not the bumblebee of noise that turned at the back of his throat and winged out his nostrils. What hurt buzzed down. It stung and stung inside him, and in turn the moan sharpened. It became a scream, louder, a song, a crazy song that whined through the pillars and blew out to the grass, until the strange hatted creature on the lawn turned and threw his arms wide, and looked in the night like a scarecrow.

Eli ran, and when he reached the car the pain was only a bloody scratch across his neck where a branch had whipped back as he fled the greenie's arms.

THE following day his son was born. But not till one in the afternoon, and by then a great deal had happened.

First, at nine-thirty the phone rang. Eli leaped from the sofa—where he'd dropped the night before—and picked it screaming from the cradle. He could practically smell the hospital as he shouted into the phone, "Hello, yes!"

"Eli, it's Ted. Eli, he *did* it. He just walked by the store. I was opening the door, Eli, and I turned around and I swear I thought it was you. But it was him. He still walks like he did, but the clothes, Eli, the clothes."

"Who?"

"The greenie. He has on a man's regular clothes. And the suit, it's a beauty."

The suit barreled back into Eli's consciousness, pushing all else aside. "What color suit?"

"Green. He's just strolling in the green suit like it's a holiday. Eli . . . is it a Jewish holiday?"

"Where is he now?"

"He's walking straight up Coach House Road, in this damn tweed job. Eli, it worked. You were right."

"We'll see."

"What next?"

"We'll see."

He took off the underwear in which he'd slept and went into the kitchen where he turned the light under the coffee. When it began to perk he held his head over the pot so it would steam loose the knot back of his eyes. It still hadn't when the phone rang.

"Eli, Ted again. Eli, the guy's walking up and down every street in town. Really, he's on a tour or something. Artie called me, Herb called me. Now Shirley calls that he just walked by our house. Eli, go out on the porch, you'll see."

Eli went to the window and peered out. He couldn't see past the bend in the road, and there was no one in sight.

"Eli?" He heard Ted from where he dangled over the telephone table. He dropped the phone into the hook, as a few last words floated up to him—"Eliyousawhim . . . ?" He threw on the pants and shirt he'd worn the night before and walked barefoot onto his front lawn. And sure enough, his apparition appeared around the bend: in a brown hat a little too far down on his head, a green suit too far back on the shoulders, an unbuttoned-down button-down shirt, a tie knotted so as to leave a two-inch tail, trousers that cascaded onto his shoes—he was shorter than that black hat had made him seem. And moving the clothes was that walk that was not a walk, the tiny-stepped shlumpy gait. He came round the bend, and for all his strangeness—it clung to his whiskers, signalled itself in his locomotion—he looked like he belonged. Eccentric, maybe, but he belonged. He made no moan, nor did he invite Eli with wide flung arms. But he did stop when he saw him. He stopped and put a hand to his hat. When

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he felt for its top, his hand went up too high. Then it found the level and fiddled with the brim. The fingers fiddled, fumbled, and when they'd finally made their greeting, they traveled down the fellow's face and in an instant seemed to have touched each one of his features. They dabbed the eyes, ran the length of the nose, swept over the hairy lip, until they found their home in the hair that hid a little of his collar. To Eli the fingers said, *I have a face, I have a face at least.* Then his hand came through the beard and when it stopped at his chest it was like a pointer—and the eyes asked a question as tides of water shifted over them. *The face is all right, I can keep it?* Such a look was in those eyes, that Eli was still seeing them when he turned his head away. They were the hearts of his jonquils, that only last week had appeared —they were the leaves on his birch, the bulbs in his coach-lamp, the droppings on his lawn: those eyes were the eyes in his head. They were his, he had made them. He turned and went into his house and when he peeked out the side of the window, between shade and molding, the green suit was gone.

The phone.

"Eli, Shirley."

"I saw him, Shirley," and he hung up.

He sat frozen for a long time. The sun moved around the windows. The coffee steam smelled up the house. The phone began to ring, stopped, began again. The mailman came, the cleaner, the bakeryman, the gardener, the ice cream man, the League of Woman Voters lady. A Negro woman spreading some strange Gospel calling for the revision of the Food and Drug Act knocked at the front, rapped the windows, and finally scraped a half dozen pamphlets under the back door. But Eli only sat, without underwear, in last night's suit. He answered no one.

Given his condition, it was strange that the trip and crash at the back door reached his inner ear. But in an instant he seemed to melt down into the crevices of the chair, then to splash up and out to where the clatter had been. At the door he waited. It was silent, but for a fluttering of damp little leaves on the trees. When he finally opened the door, there was no one there. He'd expected to see green, green, green, big as the doorway, topped by his hat, waiting for him with those eyes. But there was no one out there, except for the Bonwit's box which lay bulging at his feet. No string tied it and the top rode high on the bottom. *The coward! He couldn't do it! He couldn't!*

The very glee of that idea pumped fuel to his legs. He tore out across his back lawn, past his new spray of forsythia, to catch a glimpse of the bearded one fleeing naked through yards, over hedges and fences, to the safety of his hermitage. In the distance a pile of pink and white stones—which Harriet Knudson had painted the previous day—tricked him. "Run," he shouted to the rocks, "Run, you . . ." but he caught his error before anyone else did, and though he peered and craned there was no hint anywhere of a man about his own size, with white, white, terribly white skin (how white must be the skin of his body!) in cowardly retreat. He came slowly, curiously, back to the door. And while the trees shimmered in the light wind, he removed the top from the box. The shock at first was the shock of having daylight turned off all at once. Inside the box was an eclipse. Then black sorted from black, and shortly there was the glassy black of lining, the coarse black of trousers, the dead black of fraying threads, and in the center the mountain of black: the hat. He picked the box from the doorstep and carried it inside. For the first time in his life he *smelled* the color of blackness: a little stale, a little sour, a little old, but nothing that could overwhelm you. Still, he held the package at arm's length and deposited it on the dining room table.

Twenty rooms on a hill and they store their old clothes with me! What am I supposed to do with them? Give them to charity? That's where they came from. He picked up the hat by the edges and looked inside. The crown was smooth as an egg, the brim practically threadbare. There is nothing else to do with a hat in one's hands but put it on, so Eli dropped the thing on his head. He opened the door to the hall closet and looked at himself in the full length mirror. The hat gave him bags under the eyes. Or perhaps he had not slept well. He pushed the brim lower till a shadow touched his lips. Now the bags under his eyes had inflated to become his face. Before the mirror he unbuttoned his shirt, unzipped his trousers, and then, shedding his clothes, he studied what he was. What a silly disappointment to see yourself naked in a hat. Especially in that hat. He sighed, but could not rid himself of the great weakness that suddenly set on his muscles and joints, beneath the terrible weight of the stranger's strange hat.

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He returned to the dining room table and emptied the box of its contents: jacket, trousers, and vest (*it* smelled deeper than blackness). And under it all, sticking between the shoes that looked chopped and bitten, came the first gleam of white. A little fringed serape, a gray piece of semi-underwear, was crumpled at the bottom, its thready border twisted into itself. Eli removed it and let it hang free. What is it? For warmth? To wear beneath underwear in the event of a chest cold? He held it to his nose but it did not smell from Vicks or mustard plaster. It was something special, some Jewish thing. Special food, special language, special prayers, why not special BVDs? So fearful was he that he would be tempted back into wearing his traditional clothes—reasoned Eli—that he had carried and buried in Woodenton everything, including the special underwear. For that was how Eli now understood the box of clothes. The greenie was saying, Here, I give up. I refuse even to be tempted. We surrender. And that was how Eli continued to understand it until he found he'd slipped the white fringy surrender flag over his hat and felt it clinging to his chest. And now, looking at himself in the mirror, he was momentarily uncertain as to who was tempting who into what. Why *did* the greenie leave his clothes? Was it even the greenie? Then who was it? And why? But, Eli, for Christ's sake, in an age of science things don't happen like that. . . .

REGARDLESS of who was the source of the temptation, what was its end, not to mention its beginning, Eli, some moments later, stood draped in black, with a little white underneath, before the full length mirror. He had to pull down on the trousers so they would not show the hollow of his ankle. The greenie, didn't he wear socks? Or had he forgotten them? The mystery was solved when Eli mustered enough courage to investigate the trouser pockets. He had expected some damp awful thing to happen to his fingers should he slip them down and out of sight—but when at last he jammed bravely down he came up with a khaki Army sock in each hand. As he slipped them over his toes, he invented a genesis: a GI's present. Plus everything else lost between 1938 and 1945, he had also lost his socks. Not that he had lost the socks, but that he'd had to stoop to accepting these, made Eli almost cry. To calm himself he walked out the back door and stood looking at his lawn.

On the Knudson back lawn, Harriet Knudson was giving her stones a second coat of pink. She looked up just as Eli stepped out. Eli shot back in again and pressed himself against the back door. When he peeked between the curtain all he saw were paint bucket, brush, and rocks scattered on the Knudson's pink-spattered grass. The phone rang. Who was it—Harriet Knudson? Eli, there's a Jew at your door. *That's me.* Nonsense, Eli, I saw him with my own eyes. *That's me, I saw you too, painting your rocks pink.* Eli, you're having a nervous breakdown again. Jimmy, Eli's having a nervous breakdown again. Eli, this is Jimmy, hear you're having a little breakdown, anything I can do, boy? Eli, this is Ted, Shirley says you need help. Eli, this is Artie, you need help. Eli, Harry, you need help you need help. . . . The phone rattled its last and died.

"God helps those who help themselves," intoned Eli, and once again he stepped out the door. This time he walked to the center of his lawn and in full sight of the trees, the grass, the birds, and the sun, revealed that it was he, Eli, in the costume. But nature had nothing to say to him, and so stealthily he made his way to the hedge separating his property from the field beyond and he cut his way through, losing his hat twice in the underbrush. Then, clamping the hat to his head, he began to run, the threaded tassels jumping across his heart. He ran through the weeds and wild flowers, until on the old road that skirted the town he slowed up. He was walking when he approached the Gulf station from the back. He supported himself on a huge tireless truck rim, and among tubes, rusted engines, dozens of topless oil cans, he rested. With a kind of brainless cunning, he readied himself for the last mile of his journey.

"How are you, Pop?" It was the garage attendant, rubbing his greasy hands on his overalls, and hunting among the cans.

Eli's stomach lurched and he pulled the big black coat round his neck.

"Nice day," the attendant said and started around to the front.

"Shalom," Eli whispered and zoomed off towards the hill.

The sun was directly overhead when Eli reached the top. He had come by way of the woods, where it was cooler, but still he was perspiring beneath his new suit. The hat had no sweat band and the cloth clutched his head. The children were playing. The children were always playing, as if it was that alone that

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Tzuref had to teach them. In their shorts, they revealed such thin legs that beneath one could see the joints swivelling as they ran. Eli waited for them to disappear around a corner before he came into the open. But something would not let him wait—his green suit. It was on the porch, wrapped around the bearded fellow, who was painting the base of a pillar. His arm went up and down, up and down, and the pillar glowed like white fire. The very sight of him popped Eli out of the woods and onto the lawn. He did not turn back, though his insides did. He walked up the lawn, but the children played on; tipping the black hat, he mumbled, "Shhh . . . shhhh," and they hardly seemed to notice.

At last he smelled paint.

He waited for the man to turn to him. He only painted. Eli felt suddenly that if he could pull the black hat down over his eyes, over his chest and belly and legs, if he could shut out all light, then a moment later he would be home in bed. But the hat wouldn't go past his forehead. He couldn't kid himself—he was there. No one he could think of had forced him to do this.

The greenie's arm flailed up and down on the pillar. Eli breathed loudly, cleared his throat, but the greenie wouldn't make life easier for him. At last, Eli had to say, "Hello."

The arm swished up and down; it stopped—two fingers went out after a brush hair stuck to the pillar.

"Good day," Eli said.

The hair came away; the swishing resumed.

"Shalom," Eli whispered and the fellow turned.

The recognition took some time. He looked at what Eli wore. Up close, Eli looked at what he wore. And then Eli had the strange notion that he was two people. Or that he was one person wearing two suits. The greenie looked to be suffering from a similar confusion. They stared long at one another. Eli's heart shivered, and his brain was momentarily in such a mixed-up condition, that his hands went out to button down the collar of his shirt that somebody else was wearing. What a mess! The greenie flung his arms over his face.

"What's the matter . . ." Eli said. The fellow had picked up his bucket and brush and was running away. Eli ran after him.

"I wasn't going to hit . . ." Eli called. "Stop . . ." Eli caught up and grabbed his sleeve. Once again, the greenie's hands flew up to his face. This time, in the violence, white paint spattered both of them.

"I only want to. . . ." But in that outfit Eli didn't really know what he wanted. "To talk . . ." he said finally. "For you to look at me. Please, just *look* at me. . . ."

The hands stayed put, as paint rolled off the brush onto the cuff of Eli's green suit.

"Please . . . please," Eli said, but he did not know what to do. "Say something, speak *English*," he pleaded.

The fellow pulled back against the wall, back, back, as though some arm would finally reach out and yank him to safety. He refused to uncover his face.

"Look," Eli said, pointing to himself. "It's your suit. I'll take care of it."

No answer—only a little shaking under the hands, which led Eli to speak as gently as he knew how.

"We'll . . . we'll mothproof it. There's a button missing,"—Eli pointed—"I'll have it fixed. I'll have a zipper put in. . . . Please, please—just look at me. . . ." He was talking to himself, and yet how could he stop? Nothing he said made any sense—that alone made his heart swell. Yet somehow babbling on, he might babble something that would make things easier between them. "Look. . . ." He reached inside his shirt to pull the frills of underwear into the light. "I'm wearing the special underwear, even. . . . Please," he said, *"please, please, please,"* he sang, as if it were some sacred word. "Oh, *please*. . . ."

Nothing twitched under the tweed suit—and if the eyes watered, or twinkled, or hated, he couldn't tell. It was driving him crazy. He had dressed like a fool, and for what? For this? He reached up and yanked the hands away.

"There!" he said—and in that first instant all he saw of the greenie's face were two white droplets stuck to each cheek.

"Tell me—" Eli clutched his hands down to his sides—"tell me, what can I do for you, I'll do it. . . ."

Stiffly, the greenie stood there, sporting his two white tears.

"Whatever I can do. . . . Look, look what I've done *already*." He grabbed his black hat and shook it in the man's face.

And in exchange, the greenie gave him an answer. He raised one hand to his chest, and then jammed it, finger first, towards the horizon. And with what a pained look! As though the air were full of razors! Eli followed the finger

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and saw beyond the knuckle, out past the nail, Woodenton.

"What do you want?" Eli said. "I'll bring it!"

Suddenly the greenie made a run for it. But then he stopped, wheeled, and jabbed that finger at the air again. It pointed the same way. Then he was gone.

And then, all alone, Eli had the revelation. He did not question his understanding, the substance or the source. But with a strange, dreamy elation, he started away.

On Coach House Road, they were double-parked. The Mayor's wife pushed a grocery cart full of dog food from Stop an' Shop to her station wagon. The President of the Lions Club, a napkin around his neck, was jamming pennies into the meter in front of the Bit-in-Teeth Restaurant. Ted Heller caught the sun, as it glazed off the new Byzantine mosaic entrance to his shoe shop. In pinkened jeans, Mrs. Jimmy Knudson was leaving Halloway's Hardware, a paint bucket in each hand. Roger's Beauty Shoppe had its doors open—women's heads in silver bullets far as the eye could see. Over by the barber shop the pole spun, and Artie Berg's youngest sat on a red horse, having his hair cut; his mother flipped through *Look,* smiling: the greenie had changed his clothes.

And into this street, which seemed paved with chromium, came Eli Peck. It was not enough, he knew, to walk up one side of the street. That was not enough. Instead he walked ten paces up one side, then on an angle, crossed to the other side, where he walked ten more paces, and crossed back. Horns blew, traffic jerked, as Eli made his way up Coach House Road. He spun a moan high up in his nose as he walked. Outside no one could hear him, but he felt it vibrate the cartilage at the bridge of his nose.

Things slowed around him. The sun stopped rippling on spokes and hubcaps. It glowed steadily as everyone put on brakes to look at the man in black. They always paused and gaped, whenever he entered the town. But in a minute, or two, or three, a light would change, a baby squawk, and the flow continue. Now, though lights changed, no one moved.

"He shaved his beard," Eric, the barber, said.

"Who?" asked Linda Berg.

"The . . . the guy in the suit. From the place there."

Linda looked out the window.

"It's Uncle Eli," little Kevin Berg said, spitting hair.

"Oh, God," Linda said, "Eli's having a nervous breakdown."

"A nervous breakdown!" Ted Heller said, but not immediately. Immediately he had said, "Hoooly. . . ."

Shortly, everybody in Coach House Road was aware that Eli Peck, the nervous young attorney with the pretty wife, was having a breakdown. Everybody except Eli Peck. He knew what he did was not insane, though he felt every inch of its strangeness. He felt those black clothes as if they were the skin of his skin—the give and pull as they got used to where he bulged and buckled. And he felt eyes, every eye on Coach House Road. He saw headlights screech to within an inch of him, and stop. He saw mouths: first the bottom jaw slides forward, then the tongue hits the teeth, the lips explode, a little thunder in the throat, and they've said it: Eli Peck Eli Peck Eli Peck Eli Peck. He began to walk slowly, shifting his weight down and forward with each syllable: E-li Peck E-li Peck E-li Peck. Heavily he trod, and as his neighbors uttered each syllable of his name, he felt each syllable shaking all his bones. He knew who he was down to his marrow—they were telling him. Eli Peck. He wanted them to say it a thousand times, a million times, he would walk forever in that black suit, as adults whispered of his strangeness and children made "Shame . . . shame," with their fingers.

"It's going to be all right, pal. . . ." Ted Heller was motioning to Eli from his doorway. "C'mon, pal, it's going to be all right. . . ."

Eli saw him, past the brim of his hat. Ted did not move from his doorway, but leaned forward and spoke with his hand over his mouth. Behind him, three customers peered through the doorway. "Eli, it's Ted, remember Ted. . . ."

Eli crossed the street and found he was heading directly toward Harriet Knudson. He lifted his neck so she could see his whole face.

He saw her forehead melt down to her lashes. "Good morning, Mr. Peck."

"Shalom," Eli said, and crossed the street where he saw the President of the Lions.

"Twice before . . ." he heard someone say, and then he crossed again, mounted the curb, and was before the bakery, where a delivery man charged past with a tray of powdered cakes twirling above him. "Pardon me, Father," he

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said, and scooted into his truck. But he could not move it. Eli Peck had stopped traffic.

He passed the Rivoli Theater, Beekman Cleaners, Harris's Westinghouse, the Unitarian Church, and soon he was passing only trees. At Ireland Road he turned right and started through Woodenton's winding streets. Baby carriages stopped whizzing and creaked—"Isn't that. . . ." Gardeners held their clipping. Children stepped from the sidewalk and tried the curb. And Eli greeted no one, but raised his face to all. He wished passionately that he had white tears to show them. . . . And not till he reached his own front lawn, saw his house, his shutters, his new jonquils, did he remember his wife. And the child that must have been born to him. And it was then and there he had the awful moment. He could go inside and put on his clothes and go to his wife in the hospital. It was not irrevocable, even the walk wasn't. In Woodenton memories are long but fury short. Apathy works like forgiveness. Besides, when you've flipped, you've flipped—it's Mother Nature.

What gave Eli the awful moment was that he turned away. He knew exactly what he could do but he chose not to. To go inside would be to go halfway. There was more. . . . So he turned and walked toward the hospital and all the time he quaked an eighth of an inch beneath his skin to think that perhaps he'd chosen the crazy way. To think that he'd *chosen* to be crazy! But if you chose to be crazy, then you weren't crazy. It's when you didn't choose. No, he wasn't flipping. He had a child to see.

"Name?"

"Peck."

"Fourth floor." He was given a little blue card. In the elevator everybody stared. Eli watched his black shoes rise four floors.

"Four."

He tipped his hat, but knew he couldn't take it off. "Peck," he said. He showed the card.

"Congratulations," the nurse said. ". . . the grandfather?"

"The father. Which room?"

She led him to 412. "A joke on the Mrs.?" she said, but he slipped in the door without her.

"Miriam?"

"Yes?"

"Eli."

She rolled her white face toward her husband. "Oh, Eli. . . . Oh, Eli."

He raised his arms. "What could I do?"

"You have a son. They called all morning."

"I came to see him."

"Like *that!*" she whispered harshly. "Eli, you can't go around like that."

"I have a son. I want to see him."

"Eli, why are you doing this to me!" Red seeped back into her lips. "*He's* not your fault," she explained. "Oh, Eli, sweetheart, why do you feel guilty about everything. Eli, change your clothes. I forgive you."

"Stop forgiving me. Stop understanding me."

"But I love you."

"That's something else."

"But, sweetie, you *don't* have to dress like that. You didn't do anything. You don't have to feel guilty because . . . because everything's all right. Eli, can't you see that?"

"Miriam, enough reasons. Where's my son?"

"Oh, please, Eli, don't flip now. I need you now. Is that it, why you're flipping—because I need you?"

"In your selfish way, Miriam, you're very generous. I want my son."

"Don't flip now. I'm afraid, now that he's out." She was beginning to whimper. "I don't know if I love him, now that he's out. When I look in the mirror, Eli, he won't be there. . . . Eli, Eli, you look like you're going to your own funeral. Please, can't you leave well enough *alone?* Can't we just have a family?"

"No."

In the corridor he asked the nurse to lead him to his son. The nurse walked on one side of him, Ted Heller on the other.

"Eli, do you want some help? I thought you might want some help."

"No."

Ted whispered something to the nurse; then to Eli he whispered, "Should you be walking around like this?"

"Yes."

In his ear Ted said, "You'll . . . you'll frighten the kid. . . ."

"There," the nurse said. She pointed to a bassinet in the second row and looked, puzzled, to Ted. "Do I go in?" Eli said.

"No," the nurse said. "She'll roll him over." She rapped on the enclosure full of babies. "Peck," she mouthed to the nurse on the inside.

Ted tapped Eli's arm. "You're not thinking of doing something you'll be sorry for . . . are you, Eli? Eli—I mean you know you're still Eli, don't you?"

In the enclosure, Eli saw a bassinet had been wheeled before the square window.

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"Oh, Christ. . . ." Ted said. "You don't have this Bible stuff on the brain—" And suddenly he said, "You wait, pal." He started down the corridor, his heels tapping rapidly.

Eli felt relieved—he leaned forward. In the basket was what he'd come to see. Well, now that he was here, what did he think he was going to say to it? I'm your father, Eli, the Flipper? I am wearing a black hat, suit, and fancy underwear, all borrowed from a friend? How could he admit to this reddened ball—*his* reddened ball—the worst of all: that Eckman would shortly convince him he wanted to take off the whole business. He couldn't admit it! He wouldn't do it!

Past his hat brim, from the corner of his eye, he saw Ted had stopped in a doorway at the end of the corridor. Two interns stood there smoking, listening to Ted. Eli ignored it.

No, even Eckman wouldn't make him take it off! No! He'd wear it, if he chose to. He'd make the kid wear it! Sure! Cut it down when the time came. A smelly hand-me-down, whether the kid liked it or not!

Only Teddie's heels clacked; the interns wore rubber soles—for they were there, beside him, unexpectedly. Their white suits smelled, but not like Eli's.

"Eli," Ted said, softly, "visiting time's up, pal."

"How are you feeling, Mr. Peck? First child upsets everyone. . . ."

He'd just pay no attention; nevertheless, he began to perspire, thickly, and his hat crown clutched his hair.

"Excuse me—Mr. Peck. . . ." It was a new rich bass voice. "Excuse me, rabbi, but you're wanted . . . in the temple." A hand took his elbow, firmly; then another hand, the other elbow. Where they grabbed, his tendons went taut.

"Okay, rabbi. Okay okay okay okay okay okay. . . ." He listened; it was a very soothing word, that okay. "Okay okay everything's going to be okay." His feet seemed to have left the ground some, as he was glided away from the window, the bassinet, the babies. "Okay easy does it everything's all right all right—"

But he rose, suddenly, as though up out of a dream and flailing his arms, screamed: *"I'm the father!"*

But the window disappeared. In a moment they tore off his jacket—it gave so easily, in one yank. Then a needle slid under his skin. The drug calmed his soul, but did not touch it down where the blackness had reached.

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BERLIN: THE MENACED CITY

The Dilemmas Facing Our Diplomats

G. F. HUDSON

IN THE nine and a half years between the raising of Stalin's Berlin blockade in May 1949 and Khrushchev's new challenge to the city in November 1958, the Soviet Union accepted the outcome of the trial of strength in which it had been worsted in 1948-49. But far-sighted observers of the German situation always anticipated that sooner or later there would be a second attempt to evict the Western garrisons from West Berlin and force the city to submit to Communist control. All that was required was the maturing of a Russian "situation of strength" and a certain consolidation of leadership in the Kremlin. By the autumn of last year, these conditions were fulfilled, and Khrushchev set out to accomplish what his scorned predecessor had failed to do.

Stalin in 1948 acted on two assumptions—that the Western powers would not try to break through to Berlin on the ground in the face of superior Soviet military forces and that the city could not be adequately supplied by air. He was right in the first assumption, for the Western governments were extremely reluctant to force the issue on the ground. But he was wrong in underestimating the capacity of an airlift—though not more wrong than most Western officials who also refused to believe in it until it had been demonstrated in practice. When the airlift proved superior to the blockade, Stalin had to choose between calling off the blockade and engaging in hostilities by shooting down the air transports. He preferred to call off the blockade. The United States still had a monopoly of the atomic bomb and Russian industry had not yet recovered sufficiently from the ravages of the German invasion for it to be able to stand up to the strain of another war.

In 1959, after years of massive economic advance and with an armory of intercontinental rockets and nuclear weapons, Khrushchev does not have to feel so nervous about the outcome of a violent clash. The political conditions for any Soviet move in Germany, however, are no longer the same as they were in 1948. Then there were no German governments recognized as sovereign entities by any of the Allied occupying powers, and the struggle was therefore directly between these powers, a fight carried on openly among non-German states for the control of a subjugated German population. But, since the two states of West and East Germany came into being, such a contest would have an undesirably imperialist look in the eyes of the world, and from a Soviet point of view there is no need for it. The Ulbricht regime, which ardently desires on its own account to gain possession of West Berlin, can be allowed to do whatever blockading is required, while the Soviet Union can simply use its power to protect its puppet against external "aggression." Hence, Moscow has announced its intention to transfer to East Germany the remaining rights and obligations of the Soviet Union with regard to Berlin. A subsidiary aim of this tactic is to compel the Western powers to deal with and ultimately recognize diplomatically the East German government, but the primary purpose, as in 1948, is to bring West Berlin under Communist control. The difference now is that this will be done in the name of a German state, with the Soviet Union as second instead of principal, and consequent-

G. F. HUDSON, of St. Antony's College, Oxford, here examines the alternatives for Western diplomacy in the Berlin crisis. Professor Hudson, who served seven years in the British Foreign Office, most recently contributed "The Peking-Moscow Axis" (December 1958).

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ly there will be more room for maneuver without a head-on clash between the forces of the great powers.

Moscow has not demanded anything so crude as the incorporation of West Berlin into East Germany. It is merely to be turned into a "free city," instead of being, as it legally is now, a *Land* of the German Federal Republic. But nobody with any memory of Communist take-over methods in Europe since 1944 can suppose that the "free city" is meant to be more than a halfway house on the way to incorporation. Psychologically, it would mean that the Berliners would have to sever the links with West Germany on which their morale and political aspirations depend; they would be not only geographically but politically isolated behind the Iron Curtain. If Western troops were to be withdrawn, this would induce a feeling of utter helplessness. An increasing number of the more prudent citizens under various forms of pressure would hasten to come to terms wtih the local Communists, until Khrushchev and Ulbricht could triumphantly announce to the world that the "free city" had voluntarily asked for incorporation in the German "Democratic" Republic.

THE situation would be no better if, in accordance with Khrushchev's recent proposal, a guarantee military force, including Russian as well as Western troops, were to be stationed in West Berlin. The mere sight of Russian uniforms in West Berlin fourteen years after the original Russian capture of the city, with no corresponding presence of Western troops in East Berlin, would be visible evidence that Russia had won the cold war, and all but the most stout-hearted would begin to take thought for their personal safety. Moreover, such a guarantee force could not possibly act to protect the city against the infiltration of Communist armed gangs from East Berlin; the Russian contingent would be there not to take part in, but to frustrate, any military action in support of the West Berlin police. That Khrushchev should put up such a transparently fraudulent plan seems to show that he has a very low opinion of the intelligence of those with whom he intends to negotiate; but in accordance with his favorite technique of diplomacy by press publicity, he probably hopes to gain a favorable response from sections of Western public opinion for which the creation of an international force is a panacea for all problems in world affairs.

West Berlin might be taken over in one of three ways: by a direct military invasion, by infiltration of paramilitary groups, or by interruption of communications with West Germany. The Western army units now in West Berlin could not hold out by themselves for long against a serious attack by Soviet and East German regular forces, but they would act as a tripwire since such an attack would be an open act of war against the Western powers. They could without help from outside deal with any infiltration of irregulars from East Germany. They could not, however, assure communications with West Germany if these were cut off, nor would they necessarily be involved if they were not themselves directly attacked. In any new blockade of West Berlin, a decision to open up access to the city by force would have to be taken by the Western governments in the light of these circumstances and put into effect with ground or air forces stationed in Western Europe; the units actually in Berlin could then only be regarded as a besieged garrison.

The transfer of powers from the Soviet Union to East Germany would make no practical difference in Berlin if the Ulbricht regime would accept the same obligations of non-interference with transport to and from the city that the Russians have accepted since 1949. East German police already play a part in regulating the traffic by road, rail, and canal, and if there were a clearly recognized right of free access it would be possible to deal with East German officials on administrative and technical questions without having diplomatic relations with Ulbricht's government. But all the talk on the Communist side about East Germany having full territorial sovereignty,

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both by land and air, after the termination of the remaining Soviet occupation rights, indicates that the Communist intention is to bargain on the basis that any access to Berlin through East German territory can only be by grace and favor of the sovereign authority. The Western powers are thus still paying for their original gigantic mistake of taking up military occupation sectors in Berlin without insisting on extraterritorial corridors of communication through what used to be the Soviet Zone of Germany. As it is, their rights depend partly on the original inter-Allied agreement on occupation zones and sectors and partly on the agreement of May 1949 which terminated the Berlin blockade. The East German government was not a party to either of these agreements, and it now claims that any rights it grants to the Western powers or to West Germany must be the result of fresh negotiation—in which, as the sovereign state with territory all around West Berlin, it will start with a decisive advantage.

WHAT, then, is the vital interest that the West has at stake in this situation? It is, briefly, to maintain the independence of West Germany, of which West Berlin is a detached fragment. To abandon the people of West Berlin under duress in 1959, after giving them security for fourteen years, would be not merely to connive at the Communist conquest of an urban area of two million inhabitants, but also a betrayal of the cause of democracy so great that all confidence in the good faith of the Western powers would be destroyed. There can be no doubt about the wishes of the West Berliners; they were emphatically reaffirmed at the recent city elections, even after Khrushchev had announced the new drive against the city's freedom with its undertone of menace to all who might resist. The people of West Berlin have never allowed themselves to be intimidated by the Soviet power which envelops them, and the responsibility of the Western democracies toward them was clearly proclaimed in the declaration of the United States, Britain, and France after the London Conference of 1954 that "the security and welfare of Berlin and the maintenance of the position of the three Powers there are regarded by the three Powers as essential elements of the peace of the free world in the present international situation."

No strategic interest of the Western powers, apart from the protection of the people of West Berlin, requires them to keep troops in an exposed and isolated position where they would probably become a total loss soon after the outbreak of hostilities in any major war. It would be impossible for them to hold West Berlin at all against the will of the majority of its inhabitants; even with the popular support which in fact they have, they could not make the area a base for military operations. If it were only a matter of strategic position, the Western allies would be only too glad to withdraw. Indeed, now that West Germany is an equal partner in NATO with its own army, there would be no disadvantage if the American, British, and French troops were to be withdrawn and replaced by West German units. Then there would no longer be any foreign troops in Berlin, but only German soldiers in a German city, as Khrushchev says he wants it. But, since in fact his purpose is to shift West Berlin's allegiance from West to East Germany, the substitution of West German for foreign troops would please him least of all.

In the conflict that lies ahead it is essential that the West proclaim its principles clearly and stand firmly on them. This need not mean a rigid, inflexible attitude which excludes any possibility of bargaining, but it does mean publicly distinguishing between what is more and what is less important in such a manner that the Western peoples, on whose steady support the elected governments of the West must rely in a crisis, can clearly comprehend the real issues at stake. So far, however, the Western governments have shown a remarkable ineptitude in stating their case. They have allowed it to appear that the Soviet Union, out of a desire for a settlement of the German problem, is putting forward one proposal after another

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on which the Western powers ought to negotiate and reach a compromise solution; under pressure to produce counter-proposals, they have hinted at a willingness to make major concessions of principle on the future of Germany while at the same time declaring that they will not be forced out of Berlin.

The most disastrous and confusing official announcement on the Western side was the statement of John Foster Dulles that the reunification of Germany could be brought about otherwise than by free elections. If the Western powers once abandon the principle that, as far as they are concerned and as long as the freely elected government of the German Federal Republic stands on the same principle, free elections are the *only* basis for German reunification, their cause will go down to defeat, and deservedly so. What is of fundamental importance is that the West Germans should not be pressed into any form of confederation with East Germany which would preserve the Communist dictatorship intact within a German national political constitution and perpetuate the denial of freedom to the people who live under it. The fact that such terms of settlement are being seriously considered in the West is partly due to the alarm of some Western statesmen and diplomats who see no way out of the Berlin impasse except by capitulation, and who wish to enlarge the range of negotiation so that yielding on Berlin may be disguised as part of a general German "settlement" in which the question of whether the city belonged to West or East Germany would no longer appear important.

There are also, however, certain optimists who believe that a German confederation, as a union of the West and East German states with their present constitutions, would actually be a gain for the West. They reason that the Bonn regime would be the "stronger partner" and would before long absorb the unpopular East German state into a democratic national structure; it is even suggested that Moscow has already decided to write off the Communist regime in Germany and only wants some arrangement whereby it can be liquidated by stages without undue loss of prestige for the Soviet Union. This idea of saving the Soviet face by resort to the "inevitability of gradualness" is closely connected with the suggestion that it would not matter if free elections were not held to inaugurate German unity because there could be a pledge that they would be held at the end of, say, five years. Anyone who remembers how the Western recognition of the Bierut regime in Poland was made conditional on a pledge of free elections which was never honored will know what to think of proposals which put a German confederation first in point of time with trust that free elections will follow. Nor is there any evidence to justify the belief that Moscow is prepared to allow the liquidation of the German Communist state through free elections; indeed, Khrushchev has been at enormous pains to refute it. It is hardly possible for him to commit himself more unreservedly than he has to the preservation of the existing political and economic structure in East Germany. This is, in fact, a basic need for Soviet policy; the collapse of any part of the Communist system in Eastern Europe would be likely to endanger the rest of it and ultimately to have serious repercussions inside the Soviet Union itself.

UNFORTUNATELY, the Western position that Germany can only be reunified through free, all-German elections has come to be identified in the public mind with the claim that a Germany thus reunified should be allowed to join NATO. Many commentators have argued that it is so obviously impossible for Russia to agree to this—since it would mean a large increase in the forces of the West with no compensating gain for Russia—that the neutralization of Germany is the only basis on which negotiations with Russia for the reunification of Germany could have any chance of success. From this premise, some have gone on to urge that the Western powers should urge the Bonn government to get together with Ulbricht and Grotewohl and work out an agreement for a confederated neutral Germany, so that the

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great powers can then disengage and remove their armies, leaving a new and larger Switzerland as a buffer between them.

But what is really implied in the idea of a German confederation? It has been made clear from the Communist side that it can only be on the basis of parity between two sovereign states; a totalitarian regime is to be combined at the top with a democratic one. The Communists would continue to be able to rig elections in their own domain, and in the confederation would have a built-in parity with the sum of other political parties and could maneuver between them from a position of superior strength. Such a composite state would certainly not be a democracy and it would probably not long remain neutral, but would be drawn by degrees into the Soviet orbit.

In spite of the difficulties and risks involved in the idea of a neutralization of Germany, it would be sound policy for the Western powers to offer agreement on the neutralization of Germany, on condition of free elections to precede, and not to follow, reunification. Tactically, it is essential for the West to render itself invulnerable to the charge that it is preventing the reunification of Germany by insisting on future German membership in NATO. Moreover, if the bargain were to be accepted, it could reasonably be hoped that the Germany emerging from nationwide free elections would be stable, pacific, and friendly to the West, even though no longer a part of the Western defense system. But if, as all the evidence indicates, Moscow is determined to maintain the East German regime intact, whether separately or within a confederation, the offer of neutrality in return for free elections would not be accepted. Then the Western powers could make full political use of the advantage they would obtain by the Russian refusal. They could convincingly refute the contention that Russian concern about Germany is primarily due to a quest for security and fear of the rearming of West Germany as a member of the North Atlantic alliance.

Moreover, once the question of political liberty in Germany had been separated from that of a German right to join NATO, the West could take a much firmer stand on its political principles. Far from striving to find some formula by which poor old Ulbricht can be saved without undue loss of face from exposure to contested elections, the point should be made relentlessly on every occasion that freedom of elections is opposed simply because the Communist dictatorship does not represent the people of East Germany and dares not face the electorate in a fair fight. Propaganda on these lines is not, of course, going to knock down a regime with a strong apparatus of police and the Soviet army behind it, but it should at least demonstrate that the Western democracies are in earnest about defending political liberty in Germany where it already exists, and are not ready to sell it for a phantom "settlement" of the German question.

If the Russians are not willing to trade free elections for German neutrality and if the West resists attempts to impose a confederation of the two German states without free elections, then the situation remains essentially as it is, with Germany partitioned and the two parts integrated with the Western and Soviet blocs respectively. But if this situation continues, what can be the future status of West Berlin? Is there any scope for negotiation, or have the Western powers simply a straight choice between capitulation and being prepared to fight if their communications are interrupted?

As long as the Western Allies are resolved neither to recognize the East German regime nor to allow West Berlin to be forced to submit to Communist control, they have little scope for bargaining: almost any concession reducing the present rights of the Western powers and of the West Berlin administration would render it impossible for the city to preserve its independence. But it need not be out of the question for the three Western powers and West Germany to accord diplomatic recognition to the East German regime, thereby accepting the fact that there are two separate states in Germany, that one of these states is under the

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military protection of the Soviet Union, and that there is no prospect of a unification of Germany on a democratic basis until there is a radical change in the regime of the Soviet Union itself. If the Western governments, including Bonn, are not willing—as they should not be willing—to bring the Ulbricht tyranny into a German confederation, then the best thing they can do is to deal with it as they do with the present governments of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania. Recognition of East Germany would certainly add to the prestige of the Ulbricht regime and enable it to play a greater part in international affairs than it can at present, but it is arguable that this would involve no serious worsening of the present situation, in which East Germany is sustained by Russia and advancing in economic strength.

The Bonn government has so far maintained its claim to be the only legitimate government of Germany and its policy of refusing to have diplomatic relations with any nation except Russia which recognizes the East German regime. But the assumption underlying this policy has been that, by keeping East Germany diplomatically isolated and unrecognized, it would be possible to convince the Russians of the unwisdom of giving it continued support. Bonn, however, should be persuaded by this time that the Russians are not going to discard their East German puppets and that it will therefore be necessary to coexist with them for an indefinite period. In these circumstances, the disadvantages of recognition will have to be weighed against the possible gain to be made by granting recognition in return for a Soviet and East German recognition of West Berlin as a detached portion of West Germany, with precise guarantees for its communications with the main West German territory. In other words, the fact of the cold war would be recognized by an agreement that both German states should have international *de jure* standing, each one to hold exactly the territory it already has. Such an acceptance of the partition of Germany could not be regarded as a final separation, for the East German dictatorship would be eliminated whenever the working of political forces within Russia removed the support on which it depends. But in the meantime the cause of peace may best be served by a pact on the basis of the realities of power and will which have produced the existing frontiers in Central Europe.

IT MAY be, however, that even recognition of the Ulbricht regime would not be sufficient to induce Moscow to give up its resolve to get control of West Berlin. In that case, the Western powers would have in effect three alternative courses of action. The first would be to resolve to hold West Berlin and keep open its communications even at the risk of war with Russia. The Western governments may well come to hold the view—which President Eisenhower apparently holds already—that if Russia is indeed ready to fight over Berlin, the West will not avoid an armed conflict by yielding there, but will merely postpone it, as Britain and France did by the Munich surrender. If, however, the West is going to stand firm against Soviet threats, it must be with a genuine willingness to face war in the event of Soviet action against West Berlin, and not simply in the belief that the Russians are bluffing; any underestimate of the gravity of the situation would be likely to result in a panic retreat at the last moment if the crisis reached the brink.

If, on the other hand, the Western governments are not convinced that the issue is one for which the risk of war should be taken—or if their peoples are not sufficiently behind them to make it practical politics to take such a risk—then they have two alternative policies. One is to settle on terms which would, under whatever disguise—and a formula *à la Yaltaise* could no doubt be found—enable the Russsians and their East German puppets to dictate to the people of West Berlin and bring the city by stages under Communist control. This would be an unmitigated political disaster for the West and would have catastrophic effects on the morale of West Germnay.

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The alternative—on the premise of avoiding a challenge to war—would be to evacuate West Berlin, evacuate all the West Berliners who wished to migrate, and build a new city for them in West Germany with funds to be provided jointly by all the Western nations. This, in spite of being a withdrawal in the face of the enemy, would at the same time be an act of defiance and of preservation of freedom, and it would also make a very strong appeal to the sympathies of all neutral countries.

Whichever of these courses of policy the Western governments adopt, it is essential that they be fully agreed among themselves and that they carry their peoples with them. The democracies are certainly faced with a trial of strength and a test of nerves more serious than any they have had to meet since the downfall of Hitler's Third Reich. They have to deal with a dictator who, even if he has shown himself so far less sanguinary than Hitler or Stalin, appears to be afflicted with an extremely dangerous recklessness and instability of temperament which might lead him to plunge wildly in a moment of acute crisis. He has committed himself on the German question to a degree which is making it increasingly difficult for him to draw back without a loss of prestige which he can ill afford. He may perhaps be bluffing, but it is safer to assume that he is determined to get West Berlin in one way or another—*So oder so,* as Hitler used to say.

ROTTING TREES

PHILIP LEVINE

The cot trees rotting
In the near orchard
Have injured nothing
If, in this lost world,
One's eventual
Decline is the last
Duty, the slow fall
Of ripe fruit to dust
Or alluvial
Mould surely behooves
Creation—the scheme
Compounded of loves
With which the stumps teem

Not for the lost tree,
Nor for the lost sake
Of eternity
I presume to speak.
Here, from the cursed mouth,
I commit the act:
These words you taught me
When you taught me all,
Are they from the tree
In which was my fall?

No, I was not there
Nor knew the moment—
The first breath of air—
Nor know what it meant,
But I am beneath
You now, and I know
The coming of breath
And the fear of slow
Withdrawal, and you do
Not. Now will You touch
Me, or will You turn,
Refusing to watch
Faint limbs that will burn?

This is the second poem by Philip Levine to appear in Commentary; his first, "Premonition at Twilight," was published in our December 1958 number. Mr. Levine has published poetry and reviews in the *New Yorker, Antioch Review,* the *Paris Review,* and elsewhere.

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YEMENITE WEDDING

From the Israeli Scene

KOKA FREIER INFIELD

AT THE time I met Masal she was about seventeen years old. She was working in the household of friends of mine. They were Americans, like myself, who had come to Jerusalem as visitors, taking with them their four boys, and had stayed on, at first because they were interested, then fascinated and, finally, used to life in Israel. After four years in the country the boys spoke classical Hebrew fluently and English quaintly. Theirs was an informal, easygoing household, full of fun and banter. The mother was a graduate of an American college and the father a professor at the Hebrew University. The children called their parents by their first names; all four did household chores and could, if need be, cook a meal for the family. What they did not always succeed in doing was to clean up the mess left in the kitchen. And then Ann, their mother, would chide them; not gently. She gave full service to them and expected a full return. It was a delightful home, with frugal meals, good talk, and an excellent collection of books and records.

Masal came into this house as a maid, and all six of them, parents and boys, liked her instantly. They had always missed a daughter and sister, and suddenly they had one in Masal. She was a tiny Yemenite girl with enormous sparkling eyes. They pampered her, teased her, and loved her. She was easy to love. She soon learned to give back laugh for laugh, joke for joke, and upset her employers one day by suddenly addressing them as "Abba" and "Ima," father and mother in Hebrew. Masal offered a plausible enough reason: since her father killed her mother, way back in the Yemen from which they had come to Israel, she was in a sense an orphan and thus entitled to call Ann "Ima." Her father was eighty-six years old (her mother had been his fourth wife), and was more of a "Saba," a grandfather, to her. So she needed an "Abba." Her father's killing her mother she explained to us very simply. "Do you Ashkenazim know the Bible?" she asked. "If you do, surely you must remember the Ten Commandments. I don't exactly know which number it is," she added a bit shamefacedly —"maybe the fourth?" she said, turning to the youngest of the boys, nine-year-old Jonathan; "Woallah, child, you are so clever, which is the one that says 'Thou shalt not adulterate'? My mother did," she went on, "and so my father had to kill her. The village people tell me he poisoned her." She sighed. Jonathan in the meantime went to look up the word "adultery" in the *Webster* that was always ready at hand.

The first sign of trouble with Masal came when she began to refuse to go home on her days off. "What is there to go home to? Home," she said scornfully; "it is not a home, it's just awful. They nag you all day."

"Who nags you, Masal? Who are 'they'?"

" 'They,' " she said, "are the whole village. 'They' are my six sisters, my four brothers. 'They' are my hundreds of aunts, uncles, cousins, children of cousins, cousins of cousins, young neighbors, old ones, and worst of all, the old women. But," she said, half carried away by anger, and already laughing, "the worst of them all are the village elders."

KOKA FREIER INFIELD, a new contributor, was trained in child psychology at the University of Vienna, taught in American schools and colleges before and after the war, and went to Israel in 1957. She is co-author with her husband (a visiting professor at the Hebrew University) of *People in Ejidos* (1955).

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One day Masal failed to return to work so we went to look for her in her village. Lifta, on the way to Jerusalem, is a village once occupied by Arabs and now settled by Yemenites; it lies in a deep gorge, almost at the bottom of a small canyon, its houses, straggling up and down the rocky slope, are connected by steep, winding, broken steps.

The house Masal lived in was her eldest brother's and was better than the rest because he was the "mukhtar," mayor, of the village. It had a half-broken wall around it, a wooden door hanging askew on its hinges, through which one passed into a clean-swept court and then into the one huge room which was the house. It was a bare, dark, cool room, and at one end, in a corner, Masal lay on a low couch with a wet rag around her head. Our coming embarrassed her. "Shalom, Ima, shalom to you, too," she said. "You have come to see me in my castle with its American frigidaire, tiled bathroom, and foam rubber mattress? Sit down, dear visitors, there, on my upholstered chairs," she said, pointing to two low hassocks. The room, meanwhile, began to fill with people; they pushed in steadily and silently, old and young ones, children, matrons, and crones. They stared at us, and we smiled back uncertainly, not knowing how to behave nor what to expect. A very old man with a long beard, side-locks, keen bright eyes, and an earnest mouth, crinkled, though, from much laughing, opened the conversation.

"So, you are the 'Ima' of our Masal, is that not so?" he said to Ann. "See for yourself how she is"—he mimicked her prone position. "She is so sick! Sick of what?" He answered himself: "Sick of disobedience, sick of defiance of her elders. The doctor of the Sick Fund," he shrieked, "says it's Psykologia. Where, I ask you is the Psy-ko-logia? In the head? Well then," he grinned, "did he peep into it? Made a hole and peeked? I am no doctor but I could cure, oh, how quick I could cure her." He fingered his belt. "Her mother," he went on maliciously, "she paid the just price for lawlessness. But what's the use here?" he lamented and raised his eyes piously to the ceiling. "Here in Israel, in Jerusalem the Holy City where the Almighty in His eternal wisdom saw fit to bring us, blessed be His name, raise a hand to a girl and what happens?" He spat on the floor. "I'll tell you what happens. First the accursed girl runs off to the Social Aid Bureau, complaining against her elders. And then comes troubles," ticking them off on his fingers. "Trouble Number One is a shameless wench in a sweater." And now he outlined the voluptuous figure of the social worker. "So, she comes and befuddles even an old man like me. This Number One comes and preaches at me like a Holy Rabbi." He mimicked to perfection the high female voice: "'In Israel,' she says, 'women have equal rights with men. And no one can hit them, not even you.' Pfui, I say. Pfui on Israel, blessed be the Lord, who in His wisdom brought us here, where women are the same as men. Same," he smirked, "when every fool knows they are not. Shameless!" he shrieked, and by now he was enjoying himself hugely, for he was a born actor. "Shameless the women and shameless their ways!" Masal was holding her head with both hands and looking at us through her fingers, half mortified and, it was evident, quite amused. "I don't care," he held one finger up, "is the First Law of the Youth. I don't want to, the Second. And the Third," he shrieked, "is the most accursed of them all: You can't make me!"

Masal, at this point, seemed to grow weary of the tirade, and yawned hugely, breaking the mood at once. "Go away, all of you; I am not to be excited, the doctor said. If you do, I'll get worse." "Worse, you can't get worse than you are, you rebel, you woman-soldier in pants, you—you" and now he worked himself into real rage—"you shamming pill-taker, I know, too well I know, what ails you. You don't want to be married according to the will of God, blessed be His name," his anger mounted, "in accordance with the choice of your family." At that Masal turned over and faced the wall; the crowd lost interest and began to file out, and the old man, spent, squatted on his haunches, his head on his knees.

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Now Masal began to cry; hot, scalding, wordless tears. The crying wracked her frail body; she clenched her fists and abandoned herself to sobbing. "No, I don't want him. He is only a silly boy. And such a tiny one, too! Just because my sister married his brother and my aunts are his too! That's no reason for marrying anybody, is it?"

"Masal, darling," Ann said, and piled endearment on endearment. "Sweetheart, what's the matter, honey? They want to make you marry someone and you don't want him? Is that right? Come," she coaxed, "tell your Ima. Ima won't let you marry anybody you don't choose. Nobody can make a girl in Israel marry against her will." Masal poked her small fists into her eyes, wiped her nose on the back of her hand, and got up from the couch. "I am coming home with you," she smiled at Ann. We helped her pack her few belongings: a tight white sweater, a pink sheer nylon nightgown, and a few more "European modern clothes." She walked past the old man with a toss of her head and a wriggle of her hips.

For two months she did not once go home to Lifta. All this time she was gay, abandoned, and affectionate, buying gaudy, useless gifts for her "brothers" with her earnings. She went to the movies two or three times a week, and from the way she walked and talked afterward, we could guess whether she had seen Marilyn Monroe or Lana Turner. Meanwhile emissaries arrived almost daily from Lifta to see Masal, and once Yedidya, the proposed bridegroom, came, bringing her an especially low-cut sweater as a gift. This concession to "modernism" seemed to change Masal's mind. The day after his visit she announced: "I am going to marry Yedidya. He promised to be a 'modern' husband. And he promised never to beat me."

"But if he does?" I asked.

"Then," she answered, "I'll kill him. By the living God, I'll kill him the way they killed my mother, may she rest in peace."

For a while Masal spent her time between the clinic and Lifta. She invariably returned from the clinic in high spirits, telling us in fine detail what advice the "head" doctor had given her about marriage, the many questions he asked about the way she felt, and the answers that she gave him. From Lifta she usually returned in a state of depression: "They don't understand me and our modern ways. So I got mad and to spite them I called the wedding off—yes, I did." She defended herself hotly against our dismay at this latest decision. "But why, Masal? What happened this time?" First she hesitated to answer, but under our persistent questioning she finally blurted out: "It's because of you, Ima, I have called off the wedding, because of you," she repeated. When she saw Ann's consternation she said: "They say you and your modern ways have turned my head, and that I am not to come back to you after I am married. And that big bridegroom of mine, that hero," she giggled, "who is so scared of the army, he got swelled up with all their talk. 'Not my wife, she'll not be a maid for Ashkenazim,' he said. And I said, 'You shut your mouth, it's the only thing big about you. I am not married to you yet.' And you know what he said?" she turned indignantly to Ann, who was as usual mending a pile of the boys' socks. "He said: 'If you talk the way you do, you'll not be married to me or anybody else. You are a shrew with a headache made by a doctor, an Ashkenazi doctor.' That's what he said to me! Well, I packed and here I am, and here I stay until I am old enough to be a soldier. And then I'll have to leave you or else the Old Man"—she meant Ben Gurion—"will be after me."

"Well, if that's the case, off you go and do some work for a change," Ann teased; she was glad to have her Masal for another year.

But once again—the third time—the wedding day was set, for the third day of the week reckoning from the Sabbath. For on this day the Lord had said twice: "Behold, it is good"—on all other days of creation, only once. We were convinced that the wedding would really take place this time when we saw Masal fuss for weeks over her wedding

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gown, which was to be of white nylon lace with a train two meters long. "Oh, how I will raise the dust at the wedding dance," she sang out in front of the mirror. "And this two-meter train will cause two hundred meters of talk. You wait and see." To have or not to have a permanent, was the next concern. We cajoled, pleaded with, entreated Masal: "Don't spoil your lovely sleek hair. Leave it as is, it's so simple and lovely."

"So you too want to drag me back to the old days of darkness, even you," she sputtered. "Look at your hair and then look at mine!" We guiltily contemplated our own groomed short hair and the thick long braid hanging down her back. "But we never had such lovely hair to begin with," we offered feebly. The next day Masal appeared with a tightly curled permanent that robbed her of much of her charm. It seemed as if even she regretted her rashness.

At last we were ready to go down to Lifta. When we went to look for gifts for the bride we wanted to buy a hand-wrought bracelet or necklace, although, fearing Masal's disappointment, not one of Yemenite design. But she detested all Near East handicraft. To please the bride I decided on a set of multi-colored aluminum cups and a yellow pitcher, while Ann bought an equally ugly coffee set, which she knew Masal admired.

Going down on a dark night, we could see nothing until the muffled sound of rhythmic chanting guided us to the house where the wedding was being held. The hall was lined with benches on which the guests sat or squatted. In front of the benches stood roughly nailed wooden horses supporting raw pine boards. The boards were heaped with mounds of peanuts, sunflower seeds, cookies strewn with sesame seeds, bits of chocolate, bottles of soda squash, and Arak, a drink which is almost pure alcohol. From time to time a woman entered from the courtyard carrying a basket filled with more peanuts and seeds. When she saw a flattened mound, she poured new heaps on top of the empty candy wrappers and husks of seeds. The small children scattered everywhere rushed over. They stuffed food into their already unwilling mouths and then withdrew to a corner. There they curled up like puppies, slept a bit, rested, and came back to feed some more.

The seating arrangement was not left to chance, it seemed. The more important notables were placed on either side of the bride and groom, who sat under an approximation of the traditional canopy. It was a homemade affair pieced together from the same pine boards the rest of the furniture was made of. Only the seat of the bridal couple's chair was covered with sacking on top of which was spread a magnificent ancient rug. But the rug was small and the sacking showed.

Never was there a more miserable-looking couple than those two huddled under the canopy. They leaned away from each other, she incessantly twisting her new wedding band and he cracking his knuckles until they showed white. She wasn't wearing her nylon bridal gown with the two-meter train, but a beautifully embroidered black traditional Yemenite wedding gown with a matching headpiece weighted down by jingling gold coins, under which her tiny face was hidden from view. She lifted her red-rimmed eyes, hardly giving us a welcome. When she saw our dismay, she raised the skirt of her long gown a bit in derision, revealing the final shameful sign of her subjugation and surrender: she was wearing long pink pantaloons. We felt her sorrow. How could we tell her then that she could easily have been the most beautiful bride there ever was. That the Yemenite gown and crown gave her a dignity and a loveliness which the sleazy nylon gown never could. That the gown she had on had been worn by generations of brides before her, while newcomers to Israel, those who came from Germany and those who were now slipping out from behind the Iron Curtain, had lost all, father, mother, heirlooms, way of life, everything, so now there was nothing left to remember. How could one tell such thoughts to a bride who wept for Woolworth treasures.

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If the notables, elders, and holy men noticed the distracted bride and groom, they gave no sign of it. They simply went about the business of making this as good a wedding ceremony, according to the laws of Moses, as they could. Brides had wept at weddings as far back as they could remember, each for her own silly reasons. This one, for her frivolous modern gown that looked like an indecent nightshirt. But they cast sidelong, appraising looks at the groom, wondering if he would prove masterful and whether he could put some sense into the headstrong bride, if need be, with the flat of his hand. From the way they looked at him and then at each other, they left little doubt what they thought of his manliness. He sat, still and wan, pale under his brown skin, cracking his knuckles.

THE old men spurred each other on to introduce a gay mood. Each had brought, or improvised at the last minute, an instrument on which they beat out a rhythm with their hands. Kerosene cans, lids of pots, or plain pieces of tin made up the orchestra. Each, however, went his own way. The result was earsplitting. A slower man, absorbed in his own sounds, would look up and suddenly realize that the next man was faster, and would speed up and out-shout his neighbor.

As I sat amidst the din, an old man nudged me gently and pointed a long-nailed henna-dyed finger at the book he was reading. I recognized the familiar Hebrew words, and read on with him without having to look too often at the lines. And listening to the howling sounds, I realized that the men were merely vying with each other in holy fervor. At a particularly lovely or exalted phrase in the book, one would beat his piece of tin faster to point out to the next man that here was a real gem, a piece of beauty and wisdom unsurpassed.

The drinking continued during the reading of Holy Writ. Spirits rose and some young people began to clear the center of the hall of peanut shells and crawling babies. As they prepared for the dance, Masal's eyes lit up and when her eldest brother approached to ask her, as was the custom, for the first dance, she rose to follow him. A couple was already on the floor, both no more than eighteen years old, and both wearing Israeli army uniforms. They danced close to each other, melting into a slow tango. The older women averted their eyes or hid their faces behind kerchiefs; young mothers, babies in their cradled arms, looked at them instead of at the dancers.

Yedidya chose this particular moment to assert his authority over her. This was unfortunate, for he violated the brother's undisputed right. He half rose and with an angry tug pulled Masal down to the seat. She was too startled at first to react; but her brother, a tall handsome man, looked down at them with an expression of contempt and mockery. Yedidya read his face and became confused. The music continued, no one paid attention to the scene. Masal got up, wheeled sharply on Yedidya, and, her face contorted with anger, hissed unintelligible words at him as he hid his face in both his hands. Tears trickling down her cheeks, she pushed her way through the crowd. Her brother, smiling a mean, small smile at Yedidya, added softly *"chamor"*—donkey—and left. The groom remained in anguished shame, alone under the bridal canopy. He glanced about him furtively to see if anybody had heard the brother's last word. He sat and cracked his knuckles. Fifteen minutes passed. The dance went on; he sat, forlorn and alone, and Masal did not return.

From afar I noticed an old bearded man making his way to where we sat. He pushed aside the people in his path and waved his hand at me, calling words I could not hear. I thought he might be drunk, but he wasn't. He bent down, took my face in both his hands, and whispered close to my ear: "For the sake of the Lord, come out, American *gveret*—lady—and do something." At this moment Yedidya got up so suddenly that he overturned the table in front of him. He nearly fell over the boards and bottles. Stumbling over the debris, he bolted from the room. The old man took my hand and pulled

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me after him. Near the door I already heard loud voices, some cajoling, some angry, above which sounded Masal's high, thin wail. When I put my arm around her, she leaned her tear-stained face on my shoulder and sobbed: "Ima, Ima, I don't want him." "Go," I said to the old man, "go and fetch her Ima. Her name is Ann and she is the Ima, not me. You have made a mistake." I turned to go back. Ann was already at Masal's side, hugging and soothing her, and her crying began to subside. The old man returned after me: "You, American lady, whom I called by mistake. Don't go back. The groom, too has run off. Get him back, lady! Talk wisdom to him. He, like his bride, is young and foolish. Talk to him of the shame he brings on the families. Hurry, in the name of the Lord and drag him back with honeyed words or with force." He spat on the ground and sighed.

RELUCTANTLY I started after Yedidya, scrambling over the steep, thorn-covered rocks in nylons and high heels. It was pitch dark and I had to use hands as well as feet to grope my way up the hill. The dark covered my undignified advance and voices led the way. On the way I stopped to think over what I would say once I got there. "Anyway," I reasoned with myself, "he is only a boy. Just go in and say in a friendly but firm voice: 'Come on. Come along. Everything will be fine.'" And then I suddenly stood in front of his door. The voices coming from inside were not reassuring. I wanted to run away, but I went in. I saw Yedidya standing against the wall, around his neck, clinging to him, a young woman. In one hand he held a big kitchen knife and with the other he was fending her off. She spoke Arabic to him. It couldn't really be called speaking. She laughed, cried, soothed, screamed, bullied, and pleaded, and all the while she was calming him with her body. It was his sister. Until he noticed me, he seemed unresponsive to her pleading. He was limp, his head dropped to his chest, his eyes were partly closed, and his mouth was tired. "Yedidya, please come back to the wedding," I said. "She has come back and is waiting for you, and the guests are waiting too. Let go of him," I said to the sister. "He will come back with me." At the sound of my voice he straightened. His muscles became rigid, his eyes furious. "Lady from America, one step closer, one tiny step and I kill her." He pointed the knife at his sister. It was not clear whether she understood, for she increased her loving gestures. I became furious. "Why her? What has she done to you? Here, give me that knife, you little fool. Bloodshed on your wedding day! Is that what you want? Give it to me!" I moved closer, slowly, because I wasn't sure that he was not bluffing. He gave fair warning. "If you come close, I'll slash your face." He was strong, much stronger than I thought. His fist was like iron and he twisted the knife toward my face. I held on with both hands and his sister helped.

"I am no whoreson, to be persuaded by women."

"Then come like a man. Drop the knife and come back."

"Never will I marry that shrew!"

"Prove you are master. Show her your big heart. Be bigger than she is." Big, it seems, was the wrong word to say. It hurt him, and his body stiffened again. I was exhausted and wondered how it would end. It did end, swiftly. Masal's big brother came in. He took one look at us, strolled over, and, towering a head over the three of us, he simply took the knife out of his hand. Yedidya crumpled. We picked him up and put him on the couch. A woman rushed in belatedly, saw him lying there, put two and two together, wrongly, and dashed out. She came back with a pitcher of water, and, in one swoosh, she poured it on poor Yedidya, soaking him to the skin and ruining his one good suit. He lay still and let himself be handled. Masal's brother had left and, surrounded by women, he lay and we dried him like a baby. He babbled and moaned but did not care what was done to him. Someone picked up his flattened, soppy Homburg, slapped it on his head, and we led him quietly down the hill.

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THE ADVENTURES OF SAUL BELLOW

Progress of a Novelist

RICHARD CHASE

WITH the publication of *Henderson the Rain King* (Viking, $4.50), Saul Bellow confirms one's impression that he is just about the best novelist of his generation. The new book has faults; it is uneven, it is sometimes diffuse. And besides the liability of its real faults, it makes its appeal to literary qualities which, although very much in the American tradition, Serious Readers have learned during the last decades to scorn. For much of its length *Henderson* is a "romance" rather than a "novel." It forfeits some of the virtues of the novel (realism, plausibility, specificity), but gains some of the virtues of romance (abstraction, freedom of movement, extreme expressions of pathos, beauty, and terror). The book is sometimes farcical, melodramatic, zany—qualities that Serious Readers know, know all too well, are inferior to Realism and Tragedy. But *Henderson* has realism and tragedy too, although not so much as some of Bellow's other writings.

Bellow has chosen a fertile subject—a demented American aristocrat at loose ends and in search of his soul. This is a subject which, before *Henderson the Rain King*, few if any American novelists had thought of using, except at the relatively low level of imaginative intensity that characterizes the polite novel of manners. In the brutal, loony, yet finally ennobled Henderson we have a character who for dire realism and significant modernity far surpasses in dramatic intensity the frustrated aristocrats portrayed by writers like Edith Wharton and J. P. Marquand. It is interesting, by the way, that of the few reviewers of *Henderson* I have read, none mentioned the patrician heritage of the hero, although this heritage is of cardinal importance in understanding him. It is as if the reviewers still regard "an aristocrat" as nothing but a walking collection of manners and therefore unsuitable for portraiture in anything but a novel of manners. Yet even in democratic America the well-born may receive as part of their birthright a certain dynamism, a distortion of character, a tendency to extreme behavior, or other qualities not easily expressed by a novel of manners.

One praises *Henderson the Rain King* in spite of the fact that in some ways it is not up to the high level Bellow set in *The Adventures of Augie March* and in the short novel *Seize the Day*, the best single piece Bellow has written. It is a thinner brew than *Augie* (but what novel isn't?) and less sustained and concentrated in its impact than *Seize the Day*. After the wonderful first forty pages or so, during which we see Henderson on his home grounds, Connecticut and New York, there is a distinct falling off. We doubt whether Bellow should have sent him off so soon to Africa, where most of his adventures occur. We perceive that the author is not always able to make his highly imaginative Africa into an adequate setting for his hero. We fear that Bellow is in danger of confusing Henderson with another pilgrim to Africa, Hemingway. We feel that the book wanders uncertainly for a bad hour or so in the middle. But then it begins to pull itself together again, overcomes the threadbare plot, and triumphantly concludes in a mad moment of tragi-comedy.

The book's shortcomings, along with cer-

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tain qualities that strike me as real virtues, have led some Bellow devotees to put *Henderson* down as a failure or at best a misguided lark in a never-never land (if *Augie* is Bellow's *Huck Finn,* is not *Henderson* his *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court?*). But these adverse judgments are wrong. Bellow still works in a comic tradition that is greater than farce or the comedy of manners. He has not only farce and wit but also humor—a richer thing, being permeated with realism, emotion, and love of human temperament. His imagination is fecund and resourceful. His tradition, at a hazard, includes, besides the naturalistic novel, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Joyce, and Yiddish humor.

Over the years Bellow's writing has shown a great deal of flexibility and power of development. He did not start off with the big Thomas Wolfe attempt at an autobiographical first novel. He saved that subject until his third book, *Augie March,* and by doing so possibly avoided the fate of many young writers who have a special story to tell, such as that of being brought up in an immigrant family in an American city, but who find that after the story has been told, they have nothing else to say. True, Bellow's first novel, *Dangling Man,* was ostensibly autobiographical and in some of its passages it caught the experience of a young intellectual in the uncertain days of our involvement in World War II. Yet the story was told with so much reticence as to give a thin, claustral quality to the whole. Bellow's second novel, *The Victim,* was one of those books published in the years just after the war that seemed to promise a resurgence of American writing (and yet how many new writers of those days have failed to fulfill themselves!). As compared with *Dangling Man, The Victim* was notable for its increase in objectivity and drama, and for its picture of the complicated relations between a disorderly, drunken, middle-class Gentile and a hapless but morally self-directing Jew in search of a precarious status. Here Bellow was dealing with what was to be his favorite theme—the impulse of human beings to subject others to their own fate, to enlist others in an allegiance to their own moral view and version of reality. In *The Victim* it is the Jew Leventhal who must resist the attempt of the anti-Semitic Allbee to involve him in his fate. This theme gets its fullest treatment in *Augie March,* but finds its ultimate significance in *Seize the Day.*

The Adventures of Augie March first acquainted us with the formidable music Bellow can make when he pulls out all the stops. Like many other fine American books, it astonishes us first as a piece of language. There are the rather dizzy medleys of colloquial and literary words. For example, Grandma Lausch, the picturesque tyrant of the family in which Augie is brought up, is said to be "mindful always of her duty to wise us up, one more animadversion on the trusting, loving, and simple surrounded by the cunning hearted and the tough." "Not," says Augie, "that I can see my big, gentle, dilapidated, scrubbing, and lugging mother as a fugitive of immense beauty from such classy wrath." There is no doubt that Augie, who tells the whole story in the first-person, is right in describing himself as "gabby." A wayward adolescent, almost a juvenile delinquent, he sometimes seems to resemble Marlon Brando. But he is not sullen and inarticulate in the modern style of American youth—far from it. Like any Rabelais, Whitman, Melville, or Joyce, he loves to catalog things, such as the people in the Chicago City Hall: "bigshots and operators, commissioners, grabbers, heelers, tipsters, hoodlums, wolves, fixers, plaintiffs, flatfeet, men in Western hats and women in lizard shoes and fur coats, hothouse and arctic drafts mixed up, brute things and airs of sex, evidence of heavy feeding and systematic shaving, of calculations, grief, not-caring, and hopes of tremendous millions in concrete to be poured or whole Mississippis of bootleg whisky and beer."

Augie is a real poet and lover of the tongue which his immigrant race has only just learned to speak. He loves to explore its resources. And we don't complain much

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if he is sometimes a bit on the flashy side, a little pretentious and word-besotted in the language he hurls at our heads. Often he is perfectly simple and as appealing as Huckleberry Finn, whom he sometimes reminds us of, while he is still a boy and beset by odd illustions. If Mark Twain had been willing to use the four-letter word, he might have made Huck say, as Augie does, "I understand that British aristocrats are still legally entitled to piss, if they should care to, on the hind wheels of carriages."

AUGIE is hard to characterize, and of course that is the point about him. He declines the gambit of the young man in an immigrant family; he does not have the drive to succeed or establish himself in a profession. Believing that to commit oneself to any sort of function in the going concern of society is a form of death, he remains unattached and free, although to what end we never fully learn. He is a little of everything: a student, a petty thief, adopted son, tramp, lover, apprentice to assorted people and trades, a would-be intellectual in the purlieus of the University of Chicago, a suppositious Trotskyite, an eagle tamer, a merchant seaman. He is protean, malleable, "larky and boisterous," vain, strong, vital, and also a bit of a fall-guy, in fact "something of a schlemiel." The plot of *Augie March* is that of Whitman's *Song of Myself*—the eluding of all of the identities proffered to one by the world, by one's past, and by one's friends. Augie calls himself "varietistic," just as Whitman says, "I resist anything better than my own diversity." "What I assume, you shall assume," writes Whitman. And Augie reflects on "what very seldom mattered to me, namely, where I came from, parentage, and other history, things I had never much thought of as difficulties, being democratic in temperament, available to everybody and assuming about others what I assumed about msyelf." Augie remains elusive and diverse. His fate is not that of any of the memorable people he knows: Grandma Lausch, his brother Simon, Mrs. Renling, Einhorn, Sylvester, Clem Tambow, Mimi, Thea, Stella.

Not that Augie is entirely happy about himself, or sure in his own mind that varietism and freedom from ties will lead him to individual autonomy. Bellow seems to leave him wavering as the novel draws to a close. At one point Augie calls for autonomy, for the unattached individual—"a man who can stand before the terrible appearances" without subjecting himself to any of them. He wants to take the "unsafe" road and be a "personality" rather than take the safe road and be a "type." He resists being "recruited" to other people's versions of reality and significance. And yet Augie strikes us as being puzzled, as we are, by the questions: What *is* his personality, what *is* his version of reality and significance? At any rate we find him wishing that his fate "was more evident, and that I could quit this pilgrimage of mine." At the end he is married and in Paris, "in the bondage of strangeness for a time still," yet oddly wishing that he could return to the States and have children. But even the idea of paternity is not allowed to thwart his desire for unattached selfhood. Where, he asks, is character made? And he answers that "It's internally done . . . in yourself you labor, you wage and combat, settle scores, remember insults, fight, reply, deny, blab, denounce, triumph, outwit, overcome, vindicate, cry, persist, absolve, die and rise again. All by yourself! Where is everybody? Inside your breast and skin, the entire cast." But all this sounds less like an autonomous personality than a man far gone in solipsism and illusion. Augie's concluding words belie the "oath of unsusceptibility" he has taken. At the end he exclaims, "Why I am a sort of Columbus of those near-at-hand and believe you can come to them in this immediate *terra incognita* that spreads out in every gaze." Augie's wish that people could "come to" each other entirely without any ulterior motive or aggression is praiseworthy, but we share his doubts that they ever can.

"A man's character is his fate," Augie says at the beginning and end of his story. But the question, What is his character? is not answered. The idea of character in *Augie*

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March is contradictory. Bellow is, from one point of view, in the line of the naturalistic novelists (Norris, Dreiser, and Farrell—who have also written about Chicago), and he therefore conceives of character deterministically as the product of heredity and environment. "All the influences were lined up waiting for me," says Augie. "I was born, and there they were to form me, which is why I tell you more of them than of myself." On the other hand, as I said above, Bellow follows the Whitman tradition, which believes that character is the autonomous self, the given transcendent fact which no amount of natural conditioning can fundamentally change. The naturalistic account is incomplete because it tries to describe only what *produces* character; the transcendentalist account is vague, however liberating and inspiring it may be. A logical difficulty or a moral or metaphysical anomaly doesn't necessarily spoil a fiction. And in fact it strikes me that it is exactly Bellow's mixture of attitudes toward character that makes his novel such a rich experience.

WHAT Augie fears is the death of the self, and his judgment of the contemporary world is that it is terribly resourceful in its stratagems for destroying the self. In *Seize the Day* Tommy Wilhelm comes to understand the death of the self in a harrowing scene in a funeral parlor, a scene more profound and moving than anything the bumptious Augie undergoes. Wilhelm, middle-aging, an unemployed salesman, separated from his wife and two children, is on the ebb tide of his fortunes. The scene is in and about a hotel on Broadway and not the least value of the story is the accuracy with which Bellow has reproduced the bleak gerontocracy which has gathered there from all parts of New York and Europe—the "senior citizens," as our culture calls them, the forlorn octogenarians, the wistful widowers, the grimy, furtive old women. One of the aged is Wilhelm's father, a retired doctor with a professional sense of success and rectitude, who regards his hesitant romantic son as "a slob." Malleable like Augie, but less resilient, Wilhelm allows his career to be spoiled at the outset by putting himself under the guidance of Maurice Venice, who promises to get him a job as a movie star but turns out to be a pimp. He has lost, or given up, his job as a salesman of baby furniture, and now is at the mercy of the recriminations directed at him by his father and his wife. Of course, they have their point, but Wilhelm is not entirely wrong in thinking that there is something sinister and inhumanly aggressive in their nagging insistence that (as Augie would say) he allow himself to be recruited to *their* versions of reality.

But in trying to escape from his father and his wife, Wilhelm comes under the influence of Dr. Tamkin, who, whatever else we may think of him, is certainly one of Bellow's most glorious creations. Reminiscing, Augie March had exclaimed, "Why did I always have to fall among theoreticians!" It is a poignant question, suggesting that in a world where no one is certain about truth, everyone is a theoretician. And to the fastest theorizer goes the power; he is the one who can "seize the day." Dr. Tamkin, investor, alleged psychiatrist, poet, philosopher, mystic, confidence man, is one of the fast talkers. He is an adept in the wildly eclectic world of semi-enlightenment and semi-literacy which constitutes the modern mass mind when it expresses itself in ideas, the crazy world of half-knowledge, journalistic clichés, popularized science, and occultism, the rags and tatters of the world's great intellectual and religious heritages. Bellow is a master at describing this state of mind, and a sound moralist in suggesting that a Dr. Tamkin would be less reprehensible if he were merely greedy and materialistic, like the characters in naturalistic novels—but, no, he must also be a mystic, a psychiatrist, and a theoretician. And so Wilhelm, the well meaning, not too bright ordinary man, is all the more bewildered and devastated when the seven hundred dollars he has given Tamkin to invest in lard is lost and he is ruined.

Wandering the streets in search of Tamkin, who seems to appear and disappear in the crowds like a ghost, Wilhelm is jostled

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by a group of mourners into a funeral parlor where, standing by the coffin of a man he does not know, he weeps uncontrollably for his own symbolic death, the death of the self. In this scene we have in its deepest expression one side of the meaning (as I understand the difficult idea) of Augie's apothegm: "Well, given time, we all catch up with legends, more or less." The same idea is expressed in the odd English of the somewhat incredible King Dahfu in Bellow's new novel: "The career of our specie is evidence that one imagination after another grows literal. . . . Imagination! It converts to actual. It sustains, it alters, it redeems! . . . What Homo sapiens imagines, he may slowly convert himself to." But the human power of actualizing the imaginary is a two-edged sword, which can destroy as well as redeem. We can be destroyed if, as in his moment of final anguish and illumination Wilhelm understands he has done, we allow ourselves to be recruited to, allow ourselves to become actualizations of, other people's versions of reality. Yet catching up with the legend or realizing the imaginary can also be liberating and redemptive. So we gather at the moment when Wilhelm catches up with the legend of his own death—a legend that has been entertained by himself and by those he has known—while he gazes, with the great revelation, at the stranger in the coffin.

Thus it appears that although Bellow's insistence on being free is not a complete view of human destiny, neither is it simply a piece of naivety or moral irresponsibility, as has sometimes been suggested. He believes that if we ever define our character and our fate it will be because we have caught up with our own legend, realized our own imagination. Bellow's fertile sense of the ever-possible conversion of reality and imagination, fact and legend, into each other is the source of the richness and significance of his writing. He differs in this respect from the traditional practice of American prose romance, which forces the real and imaginary far apart and finds that there is no circuit of life between them. (On this point see my book, *The American Novel and Its Tradition.*) Bellow differs, too, from the pure realist, who describes human growth as a simple progress away from legend and toward fact, and from the naturalistic novelist, who conceives of circumstance as always defeating the human impulse of further thrusts toward autonomy. Which is merely to say that Bellow's sense of the conversion of reality and imagination is something he shares with the greatest novelists.

BELLOW gives the light treatment to some of his favorite themes in *Henderson the Rain King,* although there are tragi-comic moments which for the extreme expression of degradation and exaltation surpass anything in the previous books. With a fatal predictability, the conventional reviewers, often in the midst of encomia, have reproved Bellow for "descending" to farce, as well as to melodrama and fantasy. It does no good to ask where writers so different as Mark Twain, Dickens, Molière, Joyce, and Aristophanes would be without farce.

This is Bellow's first novel with no Jewish characters (although we hear at the beginning of a soldier named Nicky Goldstein, who told Henderson that after the war he was going to raise mink; with characteristic sensibility, Henderson decides on the spot that he will raise pigs). Perhaps in selecting for his hero a tag-end aristocrat, Bellow is responding in reverse to Henry Adams's statement at the beginning of the *Education* that as a patrician born out of his time he might as well have been born Israel Cohen. At any rate we find Henderson ruefully reflecting that despite the past eminence of his family, "Nobody truly occupies a station in life any more. . . . There are displaced persons everywhere." As Henderson at fifty-five freely admits, he has always behaved "like a bum." His father, though, had been an impressive example of rectitude; he had known Henry Adams and Henry James; the family eminence goes back at least to Federal times. His father had followed the traditional life of public service. He had written books of social and literary criticism, defended persecuted Negroes, and in general

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regarded it as his inherited duty to help guide the national taste, opinion, and conduct in his day.

As for Henderson himself, he cheerfully admits that he is one of the "loony" members of the family—like the one that "got mixed up in the Boxer Rebellion, believing he was an Oriental" or the one that "was carried away in a balloon while publicizing the suffrage movement." Yet he still affirms—to the point of rainmaking for the parched inhabitants of Africa—the "service ideal" that "exists in our family." Like Wilhelm in *Seize the Day,* he has faced death, not in the war but while gazing at the soft white head of an octopus in an aquarium. "This is my last day," he thought on that occasion. "Death is giving me notice." But Henderson is strong, brutal, willful, with great stature and a big belly. Very much a creature of his time, he "seeks wisdom," believing that earlier generations have performed all the more practical tasks—"white Protestantism and the Constitution and the Civil War and capitalism and winning the West," all these things have been accomplished. But, he goes on, "that left the biggest problem of all, which was to encounter death. We've just got to do something about it . . . it's the destiny of my generation of Americans to go out into the world and try to find the wisdom of life." True, Henderson is often retrospective. He has moments of family nostalgia and piety, when he tries to get in touch with his dead father and mother. For this purpose he goes to the cellar and plays a violin (a genuine Guarnerius, of course) that had belonged to his father. He croons, "Ma, this is 'Humoresque' for you" and "Pa, listen—'Meditation from Thaïs.'" As we see, Henderson is not only musical but occult. He is "spell-prone . . . highly mediumistic and attuned."

But Henderson does not find fulfillment in such activities. He is bored and dissatisfied with his disorderly wife. Like most moderns he loves and pursues "reality" and yet he is just as strongly drawn to the mythic and the magical. He is alternately depressed and exalted by his inchoate notions, in describing which Bellow shows himself again to be an inspired interpreter of the eclectic, semi-literate mind of contemporary culture. Henderson needs new realms to discover, new opportunities of service and redemption. And so he is off to Africa, an Africa which is sometimes that of fantasy ("those were wild asses maybe, or zebras flying around in herds") and sometimes that of Sir James Frazer and Frobenius.

He finds in Africa that there is a curse upon the land. A terrible drought is killing the cattle of the first tribe he encounters, for although the cistern is full of water, the water is infested with frogs, which frighten the cattle away and which the natives have a taboo against killing. Henderson improvises a grenade to blow up the frogs, but blows up the whole cistern too. This is unfortunate because things had been going well for him. For example, Henderson had been absorbing animal magnetism from the natives, as when he ceremonially kisses the fat queen's belly: "I kissed, giving a shiver at the heat I encountered. The knot of the lion skin was pushed aside by my face, which sank inward. I was aware of the old lady's navel and her internal organs as they made sounds of submergence. I felt as though I were riding in a balloon above the Spice Islands, soaring in hot clouds while exotic odors rose from below."

But it is with the next tribe, the Wariri, that his most significant adventures occur. Here Henderson performs the ritual of moving the ponderous statue of the Rain Goddess, whereupon he is made Rain King, stripped naked, flayed, and thrown into the mud of the cattle pond, in the midst of the downpour he has summoned from heaven by his act. Humiliated, abject, yet gigantic, triumphant, visionary, an Ivy-League medicine man smeared with blood and dirt, Henderson dances on his bare feet through the cruel, hilarious scene. "Yes, here he is," cries our hero, "the mover of Mummah, the champion, the Sungo. Here comes Henderson of the U.S.A.—Captain Henderson, Purple Heart, veteran of North Africa, Sicily, Monte Cassino, etc., a giant shadow, a man of flesh and

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blood, a restless seeker, pitiful and rude, a stubborn old lush with broken bridgework, threatening death and suicide. Oh, you rulers of heaven! Oh, you dooming powers! . . . And with all my heart I yelled, 'Mercy, have mercy!' And after that I yelled, 'No justice!' And after that I changed my mind and cried, 'No, no, truth, truth!' And then, 'Thy will be done! Not my will but Thy will!' This pitiful rude man, this poor stumbling bully, lifting up his call to heaven for truth. Do you hear that?"

There ensue several lengthy conversations on life and human destiny between Henderson and the philosophical King Dahfu—a somewhat pathetic monarch whom we often see surrounded by his demanding harem of naked women. He has read books like William James's *Principles of Psychology* and believes that when he dies his soul will be reborn in a lion, the totem animal of the tribe. Like the naturalistic novelists, Bellow is fond of characterizing people by analogies with animals. But Bellow, like Swift, follows the greater comic traditions of animal imagery. Tommy Wilhelm caricatures himself as a hippopotamus, yet the effect is to make him more human, more understandable, more complicated, rather than less so.

What might be called Bellow's totemistic style of comedy and character drawing gets a full workout in *Henderson*. A raiser of pigs and a self-proclaimed bum, Henderson has thought of himself as a pig. King Dahfu believes that what Henderson needs is rehabilitation in the image of the lion totem, and he therefore puts our hero through a course of what can only be described as lion-therapy, complete with psychiatric terms like "resistance" and "transference." This takes place in a cage under the palace, where the king keeps a magnificent lioness. The therapy consists in repeated exposure to the lioness, first getting Henderson to try to quell his fears of her and finally getting him to imitate the lioness, on his hands and knees, growling and roaring, so that by sympathetic magic he can absorb lion-like qualities. The scene in which he is finally able to roar satisfactorily, though still terrified, is a great comic moment. The king and the lioness watch Henderson "as though they were attending an opera performance." Henderson describes the roar he lets out as one which "summarized my entire course on this earth, from birth to Africa; and certain words crept into my roars, like 'God,' 'Help,' 'Lord have mercy,' only they came out 'Hoolp!' 'Moooorcy!' It's funny what words sprang forth. 'Au secours,' which was 'Secooooooor' and also 'De profoooondis,' plus snatches from the 'Messiah' (He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, etcetera). Unbidden, French sometimes came back to me, the language in which I used to taunt my little friend François about his sister." In this abject, ridiculous, and yet eloquent roar we are impressed with the full pathos, the utter humiliation, and also the odd marginal grandeur of Henderson. After this he writes a letter to his wife directing her to apply for his admission to the Medical Center, signing the application "Leo E. Henderson" (although his name is Eugene). For now he is resolved to become the M.D. he has always dreamed of being since, as a boy, he had been inspired by the example of Sir Wilfred Grenfell. Of course the letter never arrives.

Henderson escapes from the Wariri after King Dahfu has been killed trying to capture the lion who is his father. One need hardly bother about the plot—the conniving witch doctor, the escape from prison, the hazardous flight of Henderson. It is all pleasant enough in the reading.

But the end is magnificent. Here we have Henderson walking around the blank, wintry airport in Newfoundland, where his plane has put down for refueling. He is paternally carrying in his arms an American child who speaks only Persian and is being sent alone to Nevada. He remembers how his own father had been angry at him once when he was a boy and how he had hitchhiked to Canada, where he had got a job at a fair. His task was to accompany and care for an aged, toothless, and forlorn trained bear who was ending his days of performing by taking rides on a roller-coaster, though

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paralyzed by fear and vertigo and occasionally wetting himself, for the delectation of the crowds who watched from below. "We hugged each other, the bear and I, with something greater than terror and flew in those gilded cars. I shut my eyes in his wretched, time-abused fur. He held me in his arms and gave me comfort. And the great thing is that he didn't blame me. He had seen too much of life, and somewhere in his huge head he had worked it out that for creatures there is nothing that ever runs unmingled." Henderson the boy is long dead; Henderson the lion has disappeared, so has Henderson the pig. Henderson the bear remains, "long-suffering, age-worn, tragic, and discolored." Still a rather preposterous clown, he has nevertheless achieved a certain nobility by his way of "mingling" in the common fate of creatures. Will he remain Henderson the bear? Not if he can live up to the declarations of freedom and growth he made earlier in the book. "I am Man . . . and Man has many times tricked life when life thought it had him taped." And, though saddened, he had agreed with King Dahfu that "Nature is a deep imitator. And as man is the prince of organisms he is the master of adaptations. He is the artist of suggestions. He himself is his principal work of art, in the body, working in the flesh. What miracle! What triumph! Also, what disaster! What tears are to be shed!"

The king's words strike Bellow's "note." His main characters—Augie, Tommy Wilhelm, Henderson—are adept at imitation and at adaptation. They are different, to be sure. Augie remains young, strong, charming, yet emotionally soft. Wilhelm is wistful, unstable, romantic. Henderson is wild, brutal, a clown. But they are all malleable, emergent, pragmatic, and protean; they love freedom, development, pleasure, and change. They seek both natural and transcendent experiences that are expressive of their way of life.

What is so far chiefly missing in Bellow's writing is an account of what his heroes want to be free *from*. As Bellow is always showing, their very adaptibility lays them open to forms of tyranny—social convention, a job, a father, a lover, a wife, their children, everyone who may want to prey upon them. And all of these forms of tyranny, fraud, and emotional expropriation Bellow describes brilliantly. But only in *Seize the Day* is there a fully adequate, dramatically concentrated image of what the central figure is up against —the institutional, family, and personal fate that he must define himself by, as heroes in the greatest literature define themselves. *Augie March* is prodigiously circumstantial, but the circumstances are never marshaled into a controlling image, and Henderson is bundled off to Africa before we see enough of him in his native habitat to know fully, by understanding the circumstances of his life, what his character and his fate are. But who can complain when, once he is in Africa, we see him in episodes which make us think him the momentary equal, for tragi-comic madness, for divine insanity, of the greatest heroes of comic fiction?

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CONQUEROR'S CAUSEWAY

Why the Levant Is Levantine

RAY ALAN

NORTH from Beirut, the Lebanon foothills leave only a crumpled ribbon of coastal plain; and after five or six miles even this is crushed out. The north-south road, which but for armistice lines would link Egypt and Israel with Turkey, creeps *en corniche* round the base of a spur, only a few feet above the sea, to cross the mouth of the Dog river, site of one of the world's first stone bridges. River and spur together form what has throughout history been the major military obstacle on this vital route; and to mark their pleasure on overcoming it the commanders of more than a dozen armies—Pharaonic, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, Mameluke, French, British, and others—have left inscriptions or commemorative plaques on the face of the rock. These inscriptions sum up the history of the region and highlight an important facet of the character of its peoples.

The coastlands of Lebanon and Israel, together with the Bekaa and Jordan valleys and the grainlands of southern Syria, form the western horn of a thousand-mile crescent of cultivation linking the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf. This "Fertile Crescent" (the term is useful geographically, whatever one may think of its past political associations) and the valleys, desert tracts, and wedges of steppe abutting on it have made of the Near East's Levantine heartland a unique intercontinental route-junction. Even the Syrian desert assists rather than resists travel: flat and relatively free from the drifting sand which hampers movement in the Arabian Nafud, 250 miles further south, it is passable even to light cars and is the scene of the nomadic wanderings of some of the largest pastoral tribes in the Near East.

The importance of this basic characteristic of the region has been accentuated by the obstacles nature has placed in the way of its unification. The Crescent owes its fertility to the mountains to the west and north—the highlands of Lebanon, Syria, Anatolia, and Kurdistan—which insure the precipitation that maintains the perennial flow of the rivers of Mesopotamia and the Levant, and waters the arc of grainland and steppe straddling the gap between them. But these very mountains have fragmented much of the Levant and northern Mesopotamia into a chaos of valleys and fastnesses inhabited by self-centered, generally endogamous communities, obsessively mistrustful of their neighbors and of whatever external authority circumstances may force them to recognize. Even on the flat grain growing steppe, there is a similar social result. Here human habitation centers necessarily on wells and springs. The wells, which predominate, are deep and their upkeep may be a communal task. For ease of access, and defensive purposes, villages tend to huddle compactly, jealously, around their precious water supply, dispersed one from the other and with their backs turned against each other. It is only alongside the great river systems of Egypt and central Mesopotamia, where surface water is abundant and imposes cooperation between neighboring communities in irrigation tasks, that natural conditions have consistently exerted a unifying influence.

The diverse, introverted sub-regions of the Levant might well constitute the Supreme Geographer's lecture-room assemblage of specimen social and religious systems and

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THE fickleness of Arab political commitments, which has bemused many Western observers, is viewed here in historical perspective. RAY ALAN, a British journalist, writes regularly for COMMENTARY on Middle Eastern affairs.

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topographical and meteorological samples. In Lebanon and Cyprus, in the early spring, it is possible to ski six or eight thousand feet above sea level in the morning and bathe on a warm Mediterranean beach in the afternoon. Mount Hermon's ethereal snowcapped summit can be contemplated alike by Jewish fishermen sweltering in the subtropical heat of Tiberias and thickly-clad Druze and Maronite mountaineers in the Lebanese highlands; by Sunni and Shiite sharecroppers in the Hauran and Jebel Aamel, and Israeli cooperative farmers in Galilee; by Bedouin goatherds and Circassian peasants on the fringes of the Syrian desert, and Christian fruit growers and Mitwali smugglers in the Hasbani and Litani valleys. Yet between these neighbors there is only a bare minimum of civilized intercourse, and not always that.

Also within the shadow of Mount Hermon is a small village divided almost equally between Druzes and adherents of one of the lesser Christian sects: so little social contact is there between the two groups that they speak Arabic with slightly different accents, and an outsider can tell to which community a villager belongs merely by hearing him speak. Freya Stark once wrote of a fairly typical Lebanese village: "Here, if I ask about someone in the village, M. just says: 'I don't know her—she is Greek Orthodox,' or whatever it may be. Or 'the Mohammedans in Beirut pronounce such a word differently'. . . . Think what a capacity for hatred it must mean to live for centuries in the same village and still feel like this about the next door neighbor. . . . I haven't yet come across one spark of national feeling: it is all sects and hatreds and religions."*

Geographically a causeway between sea and desert, politically a vacuum, the Levant has thus lain open throughout history to migrants and conquerors from three continents. Something, at least, of the countless sieges, sackings, and massacres of Jerusalem and other major centers is known to every schoolboy; but innumerable less famous towns and villages fared no better. "During the Middle Ages the town passed from hand to hand, wrecked and pillaged, its fortifications dismantled, again and again. The Crusaders captured it in December 1098 and celebrated the birthday of the Prince of Peace by methodically massacring 20,000 of its citizens." This is a fragment of the history of Maaret en-Numan, a small town in the heart of the Syrian steppe, between Homs and Aleppo, but it might be true of a dozen other localities. Maaret en-Numan now has under 5,000 inhabitants: the wonder is that after so many vicissitudes civilized life should have clung on there at all. There are, indeed, in this very district of Syria, the white bones of no less than one hundred dead cities scattered over the indefensible steppe; and in the Negev-Sinai hinge between Africa and Asia, Israeli archaeologists have mapped more than two hundred forgotten settlements.

Two basic currents of migration were already flowing through the Levant in prehistoric times: westwards and southwestwards from the highlands and steppes of Iran and central Asia, and northwards from the desert fringes of Arabia and the Nile valley. With the development of pastoralism, these migratory movements increased; when spring pastures on steppe and desert fringe failed because of insufficient rain, the nomadic tribes swept with their flocks toward more favored lands. The rise of powerful, highly organized states in Egypt and Mesopotamia—whose river-valleys, natural nurseries of civilization, gave rise to a cultural homogeneity and social cohesion the Levant could never aspire to—set armies marching where before only migrating tribes had drifted. Thereafter invaders were no longer merely funneled into the area by its approach-routes but attracted by its resources. Egypt and Mesopotamia had both economic and strategic motives for seeking to dominate those parts of it which lay nearest them and to prevent the rise of

Letters from Syria (London, 1942). In February 1959 the Lebanese government, spurred by a series of violent incidents, introduced the death penalty for murders committed in the course of communal or inter-village feuding.

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an indigenous Levantine power. More often than not their natural magnetism was sufficient to accomplish this. Even after the Arabs overran the Fertile Crescent, its institutions and loyalties were quick to reorient themselves, with the stubbornness of a compass needle, along a Cairo-Baghdad axis. Mecca's political influence was ephemeral. Only one other center of attraction, Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires, has been able to disturb these lines of force more than temporarily, and with the erosion of Western influence in the region in recent years they have reasserted themselves clearly.

In February 1955 a quarrel between Egypt and Iraq produced a split of classical pattern in the Syrian government: a third of its members sided with Iraq, a third with Egypt, and a third either couldn't make up their minds or urged that Syria stay out of the dispute. Early in 1958 rumors of an Iraqi-supported "imperialist" plot against Syria (inspired by a Baghdad Pact conference in Ankara), coinciding with an internal crisis touched off by fears of a Communist takeover, drove the Syrian government of the day into an *Anschluss* with Egypt, and the Hashemite regime in Iraq reacted by forming a union with Jordan; a few months later, following the overthrow of the detested Iraqi Hashemites, Syrian opinion began to veer in favor of union with Iraq and a great many Jordanians were eager for union with Egypt.

Even when no invader or potential big brother was on the horizon, the inland towns and lowland villages were rarely able to relax their watch on two local sources of insecurity: desert and mountain. Not every encroachment by the desert on the town has been provoked by major droughts and massive tribal migrations. Local disturbances involving raids by desert nomads on farmland and villages on the periphery of grazing areas, and the consequent dislocation of urban food supplies, have followed relatively minor fluctuations of rainfall almost imperceptible to the average townsman; and some have had their origins merely in intertribal politics. Mountains may hold a dual menace for sedentary lowlanders: pastoral tribes which practice transhumance, pasturing their flocks at different altitudes according to the season, are no less ready than their Bedouin counterparts to seek by force what nature fails to provide; and turbulent ethnic and religious minorities (and sometimes outright bandits) who have found refuge in the hills are tempted in hard times, or when law and order break down under some other stress, to prey on the men of the plains. As recently as 1958 mountain-based clansmen allied with urban political dissidents, paralyzed the economic and administrative life of Lebanon for five months.

MILLENNIA of insecurity and political pawndom, of invasion and outside domination alternating with internal upheaval, have left their imprint on the Levantine character. There is a fatalistic assumption of the inevitability of foreign intervention in the region's affairs—not least on the part of those who strike the most chauvinistic attitudes. It is taken for granted that a great many newspapers are subsidized by the embassy of at least one foreign power, and some newspapers by several. When a leading political or military (or, as is common nowadays, politico-military) personality is under discussion, one is apt to hear less of his political convictions, if any, than of his affiliations, real or suspected, with outside powers. "Kamel A is America's man, of course," one's host will say, quite complacently, "and Omar B is Britain's"; or "Colonel C used to be hand-in-glove with the French but now he has turned to the Russians." This does not necessarily mean that Kamel A, Omar B, and Colonel C are thought to be in receipt of hard cash for their services, real or imagined, to the powers concerned, though such accusations are frequently made; but it is assumed that in order to protect their private interests or further their political ambitions they are willing to collaborate with the power whose influence seems to be most useful.

A shift in the regional power balance can provoke dramatic switches of allegiance. Ac-

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cording to an official Iraqi statement, Syrian ex-Premier Sabri el-Assali accepted funds from the pro-Western Hashemite government of Iraq, to work for what would have been a Hashemite-dominated Syrian-Iraqi union, up to the Anglo-French debacle over Suez; thereafter he worked for a Syrian-Egyptian merger and was rewarded with the vice-presidency of the United Arab Republic. Between 1944 and 1958 the ebullient Syrian politician, many times minister, Khaled el-Azm, was successively pro-French, pro-British, pro-French again, and then pro-Russian. (He concluded his second pro-French phase in spectacular fashion in June 1955 by visiting Paris where he negotiated an agreement providing for French help in modernizing the Syrian army, made several declarations of Syrian affection for France, and promised to tone down anti-French broadcasts to North Africa by Damascus radio; then he went on to New York to a special session of the UN General Assembly where he called for the "liberation of North Africa from French tyranny"!)

Time and again, the practical problem Levantine notables have had to face has been not how to avoid invasion but how to minimize, and if possible exploit, its consequences, and many of them have come to regard themselves as authorities on big-power psychology and the intricate art of balancing would-be conquerors, overlords, protectors, and big brothers against each other. Their skill is not to be scorned. In both world wars, the Levantine and Arab leaders managed to maneuver themselves onto the winning side, and even to reap relatively greater political advantage from the postwar settlement than the nominal victors, without making any significant contribution to the Allied cause. In the first war, the major tribal leaders of Syria and Arabia were fairly evenly divided between those who were subsidized by the Turks and Germans and those subsidized by the British. But payment of a subsidy bought only its recipient's neutrality: that of the late Abdel-Aziz Ibn Saud, for example, cost the British taxpayer nearly a million dollars a year. To stir up a small tribal revolt against the Turks, such as that led by the Emir Faisal, a flood of gold sovereigns, arms (many of which were sold to the Turks), promises, remonstrances, and propaganda was necessary; and even so, as late as the summer of 1918, Faisal was still in touch with the Turks, offering to abandon his British sponsors for the right price, and Allenby's army had the greatest difficulty in distinguishing between hostile and friendly Arabs as it advanced on Damascus. Its officers knew, moreover, that—as Lawrence's companion Stirling wrote—"if Allenby's push failed we should have little or no chance of escaping to the south: the Arabs would be sure to rise against us, for in this country only the successful are favored."* In the second war, most of the Arab governments joined the Allied camp just in time to qualify for UN membership—after Germany had been safely brought to her knees.

THE leaders concerned claim credit quite frankly—perhaps more credit than is due—for "using" the British to winkle the French out of Syria and Lebanon, for persuading the Americans to persuade the British to evacuate the Suez Canal Zone and terminate the Anglo-Iraqi treaty, for enrolling Russia to help make a mockery of the American-sponsored Baghdad Pact, and for rallying UN support in easing the British and French out of Port Said in 1956-57 and the Americans and British out of Lebanon and Jordan in 1958.† Egyptian diplomats have enthralled Levantine dinner parties with their explanation of Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser's success in retaining the Indian government's support in 1955-57 despite Mr. Nehru's personal disapproval of his intrigues in Libya, Sudan, and Lebanon and of Egyptian terrorist raids inside Israel. This was done, Nasser's own representatives have boasted, by means of a never-quite-formulated threat

*Col. W. F. Stirling, *Safety Last* (London, 1953).

†The American organization "Friends of the Middle East," despite its efforts to acquire a "pro-Arab" reputation, was denounced as a pro-Zionist and anti-Moslem body when American influence in the Levant began to wane.

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that the Arab League's eight UN votes might otherwise support Pakistan on Kashmir, a threat kept alive by offering Pakistan membership in the Mecca Islamic Congress and by occasional, purposefully ambiguous, articles on Indian-Pakistani relations in the controlled Cairo press.

On October 1, 1955, the Lebanese paper *el-Ahad* defined Arab neutralism thus: "We will exploit the West as well as the East to our advantage. . . . We shall smile at the West for a price and at the East for a price. . . . Henceforth, there will be a price on our smile." Only those totally ignorant of Near Eastern history and psychology could be surprised that Nasser based his foreign policy on precisely this formula, or could have oscillated between delight and anger as Nasser smiled first at the Americans and British (until he had assured himself of the Canal Zone base and their pactomania had become an embarrassment), then at the Russians (until he had exhausted their short-term diplomatic and economic possibilities and they had become a little too cocky), then ran a brief anti-Communist campaign in his press (until his financial agreement with Britain was ready for signature and the Russians were behaving more discreetly), and then smiled Kremlinwards again. (The Cyprus agreement is thought by some observers to have contributed to this latest tilt of the Cairo seesaw: in relieving the British government of a major embarrassment—freeing its attention and resources for imminent crises in the Persian Gulf and southern Arabia—and guaranteeing Britain possession of permanent military bases within sight of the Levant mainland, it heightened the value to Nasser of his Moscow counterweight.)

Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian journalists and officials with whom I was in daily contact when Stalin imposed his Berlin blockade and when the Korean war broke out, were delighted on both occasions at the prospect of seeing their countries' bargaining power between the democratic and Communist blocs raised by what they frankly hoped would be lengthy conflicts. In contrast, the advocacy by Western liberals and socialists of negotiations with the Soviet Union on the Near East displeases them: Lebanese and other papers have objected that such negotiations "would rob the Arab states of the initiative." It is significant that as the latest Berlin crisis took shape Arab diplomatic activity was stepped up, and the issue of Jewish immigration into Israel* was revived as an invitation to the powers to bid for Arab smiles.

DESPITE their fence-sitting virtuosity, Near Eastern leaders have frequently played into the hands of ambitious outsiders by calling in external support against some rival or potentially dangerous neighbor or against the occupant, overlord or government (even indigenous) of the day. In the first half of the 12th century the Crusaders were probably taken aback by the extent to which local Moslem chiefs were not so much willing as eager to make alliances with them against their (Moslem) neighbors. And the declaration of the then Christian townsfolk of Homs to the Moslem conqueror Khalid in 636 was typical of the accommodating outlook which made possible the replacement of Byzantine by Moslem power throughout the area: "We are confident in the superiority of your rule and justice to the oppression and tyranny under which we have been living." Similar declarations welcomed Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mohamed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, when he marched into Syria and Lebanon in 1832, and to the returning Ottoman Turks when in 1840 they expelled him. Similar declarations would have been made to the Germans had Rommel's Afrika Korps defeated the British at El-Alamein (home-made Nazi flags were hidden in many a Levantine cellar, ready to welcome them) and would be made to the Russians if ever the Red Army swept over the Caucasus.

The Syrians, in particular, as T. E. Lawrence wrote, have generally "looked outside for help and expected freedom to come by

*An issue worked to a shadow by anti-Zionist propaganda mills over the last twenty years and insignificant beside the problems raised by Egypt's 3 per cent annual population increase.

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entreaty, not by sacrifice." There can be few diplomats or foreign correspondents intimately integrated into the life of the Levant who have not at some time or other received hints, at the very least, that this party or group or that editor or politician would appreciate their embassy's support. The nominal nationalists who make such approaches see nothing inconsistent in their attitude.

The devil outside the gate is traditionally preferred to the devil within. "We know the British and French," I have heard Syrians say. "We don't know the Russians. Therefore we prefer the Russians." This sort of syllogism is encountered a great deal in local politics, particularly in the towns whose mercurial, largely discontented populations are generally willing to welcome any new master who seems likely to liberate them from their current debts and obligations. For as far back as anyone can remember, civic and political loyalties have lacked any constant focus. In Aleppo (Syria) I know responsible citizens whose dearest desire is to pass under Iraqi or Turkish rule; long before the formation of the United Arab Republic, Sunni Moslem merchants of Tripoli (Lebanon) were hoping for Syria to annex them; Christian landowners and businessmen in Beirut and south Lebanon told me in the early and middle 1950's that their country's only hope of sound government lay in a return of the French; and I have heard educated members of the *effendi* class in frontier areas of Lebanon and Jordan express a wish for incorporation in Israel.

Such confidences are not easy to gather. The constant need for attention to the whims of powerful outsiders and the intrigues of unreliable neighbors has inbred a tendency to political and social chameleonism even in circles in which, as a result of education or the exercise of authority, one might expect to find a fair degree of intellectual self-confidence and outspokenness. At its crudest, this may consist mainly in studying form, deciding who is going to win whatever conflict is brewing or in progress, and then wearing the colors and expressing the ideas most likely to appeal to the victor.

In the late 1930's and early 40's, for example, pro-Nazism was the order of the day; but in 1942, after the British victory at El-Alamein, pro-Nazi "intellectuals" began to meet in British Council reading rooms—partly for cover but mainly for reinsurance. In 1949 the same unblushing Syrian notables, sheikhs, mudirs, professional men, and political leaders who had hastened to Damascus on the morrow of the first military coup d'état to assure Colonel Husni ez-Zaim of their undying loyalty flocked, man for man, five months later, to congratulate Colonel Sami Hinnawi on having liquidated him, and were back again, after an even shorter interval, to thank Colonel Adib Shishakli for overthrowing Hinnawi. When Shishakli, in his turn, was violently superseded in 1954, the same familiar faces were soon seen in the presidential palace, greeting the new incumbent, Sayed Hashem el-Atassi.

El-Atassi's own record was revealing. In his youth he served both the Ottoman empire and the British-sponsored Arab revolt against it. A leading member of the Syrian General Congress, which was opposed to the establishment of French rule in Syria, he later collaborated with the French and, during their mandate, became president of the Republic. Subsequently he cooperated with the Vichy authorities and sent a message of encouragement to Rashid Ali during his anti-British revolt in Iraq in 1941; but he welcomed the British and Free French when they arrived in Syria two months later, and then attacked the French with mounting vehemence as the time for their final evacuation approached. He was president both before and after Colonel Shishakli's first coup, working successively with the civilian politicians and the military officers who overthrew them; and he returned to the presidency after Shishakli's removal.

El-Atassi's successor, President Shukri el-Kuwatli, was equally versatile. During World War II he was a member of Haj Amin el-Hussein's nine-man pro-Nazi committee to coordinate anti-British activity; from 1944 to 1948 he sought British favors, but in 1953, as Britain's star sank in the

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Near East, he took once more to denouncing British imperialism; after championing Syrian statehood against those who advocated a union of Arabic-speaking countries, he co-operated with Colonel Nasser in bringing about, in the guise of the United Arab Republic, what was in effect an Egyptian annexation of Syria; after presiding over and, to most progressive Syrians, symbolizing the corrupt, nepotist "old gang" regime of 1945-48, he allied himself a few years later with a vaguely "leftist" coalition which proceeded to liquidate many of his former colleagues and friends. To cite another example, in April 1957, the Jordanian minister Samir Rifai was not unnaturally in favor of the American intervention which saved King Hussein and himself from a military coup and popular uprising; in October 1957, at a press conference in Amman, he denounced "Western interference in Arab affairs"; in July 1958 he was an advocate of the British landings in Jordan undertaken after Colonel Kassem's coup in Baghdad.

British and French political officers in Syria and Lebanon between 1942 and 1946 who took the elementary precaution of getting together at intervals to compare notes were frequently entertained by the virtuosity of the Levantine personalities who visited them, not merely in expressing diametrically opposed views in the course of the same morning but in toning their views —depending upon whether they were visiting the French *mustashar* or the British—to just the right subtle shade most likely to match their hearer's prejudices. British and American officials in cities where similar collaboration has been established in recent years have been able to observe the same phenomenon, though newly-arrived diplomats still tend to be shocked when they learn that the highly pro-British or pro-American officer or civil notable who recently gave them so reassuring a survey of local affairs has just expressed completely different views to a gathering of local xenophobes.

Three or four years ago the Lebanese businessman and politician Emil Bustani successfully sold himself, in the course of the same month, to a visiting British Labor party delegation as a socialist and to the American magazine *Newsweek* as "a convinced advocate of free enterprise." In 1957 one co-founder of the Syrian *Baath el-Ishteraki* ("Socialist Resurrection") party, Michel Aflak, told a British Labor Member of Parliament that he favored peace with Israel while the other co-founder, Akram Hourani, was declaring to an all-Arab gathering that "any hand extended to conclude peace with Israel should be amputated."

WESTERN technology is enabling man to bulldoze and subdue mere geographical obduracy. Distances and natural barriers are shriveling in the Near East as elsewhere. But psychological mountains and deserts are not so easily overcome. Science has yet to find an antidote to atavism. It has made available weapons which naive or irresponsible Western statesmen have supplied to naive and irresponsible Near Eastern governments in hopes of laying their ancestral ghosts of domestic instability and regional insecurity; but these very weapons have often become instruments of deeper turmoil under the impulse of emotions, reflexes, and social forces no neat scientific formula can exorcise—which is one reason why Russia, too, is now peddling arms in the region.

The 20th century has also brought its own copious quota of invasions, intervention, and externally-fomented disorder to the Near East. As Halford L. Hoskins has written, every one of the Arabic-speaking states except Egypt "owes its present form and territorial limits more to the political maneuverings of Western European powers than to natural political evolution or to any designs or efforts of its own"—and the two world powers still warn the Near East periodically of each other's aggressive intentions. In such circumstances the Levant's age-old invasion psychosis is unlikely to atrophy, and the statesmen of the powers are likely to go on indulging for some little time to come in that Near Eastern version of "He loves me, he loves me not" of which they never seem to tire.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

TOWARD MY BIOGRAPHY

Notes on Becoming a Writer

SHOLOM ALEICHEM

SHOLOM ALEICHEM, the 100th anniversary of whose birth is currently being celebrated, is no stranger to COMMENTARY. Selections from his work published in earlier issues include: "Journalism in the New Kasrilevke" (July 1956), "Sholom Aleichem in Sickness" (October 1950), and "Sholom Aleichem in Exile" (December 1949). In addition, a memoir of Sholom Aleichem by his daughter, Lala Kaufman, appeared in September 1957, and an article on him by Norman Podhoretz in September 1953.

The selection that follows is a brief autobiographical memoir that was written in response to a request from Sholom Aleichem's friend, Y. H. Revnitzky—also the friend, publisher, and collaborator of Chaim Nachman Bialik, the great modern Hebrew writer. These notes anticipate a later, unfinished autobiography, begun in 1913 and published in 1916, which appeared in English as *The Great Fair*. Jacob Sloan translated these excerpts from the original Yiddish.—ED.

Dear friend Revnitzky,

So you want me to jot down a few notes, no more, toward my biography, do you? I'm very much afraid that there really is no call for a biography of me as yet. Don't you think it's a bit early for that sort of thing? That's number one. And, secondly, I've an urge to write the story of my life myself—to make a book of it. In the third place, nowadays, I'm (God save you from such a fate!) head over heels in business—literary business, that is. I've never been so productive, so fertile, as I am these days. You know me—I can write anywhere, on the head of a pin, or the sharp edge of a sword! . . . The only trouble is these are bad times, our people are in a gloomy way, you don't feel like laughing, and when you do—it's Pagliacci. . . . Then again, corresponding with the bigwigs, both Jews and (*mutatis mutandis*) Gentiles, takes up a tremendous amount of time. Still, for your sake I've taken off a whole hour (murderer!), and here are your "few notes." . . .

Yours devotedly,
Sholom Aleichem

A SMALL town called Voronko, no bigger than a peanut, situated near the city of Pereyaslav (where I was born in 1859) is where I spent the golden years of my youth, the first, good, foolish, childhood years. In this small town of Voronko, my father was the man of breeding, the man of wealth, the chief officer of all the local societies—Reb Nachum Vovikson, no less! And we, Reb Nachum's children, were treated with respectful consideration. We were entrusted to none but the best tutor, Reb Zerach. And we were really and truly pious.

I still remember how sweet the tears tasted that we shed at our rebbe's sermon. Every day, our rebbe, Reb Zerach, delivered a little sermon for our benefit. Afterward, at prayers, we beat our breasts over our enormous sins —for, at the same time that we were very pious, we were terrible transgressors. We lied, didn't obey Father, skipped through the prayers, stole money from the charity box (see my story "The Pocket Knife"). And as for the "secret meditations of the heart," alien ideas, thoughts—enough said!

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We had a friend, one of the older boys, old enough to be a groom (his name was Eli, Eli Kaylison)—and he told us stories that awakened our lust, spoiled us forever, turned us into grown-ups before our time. . . . Afterward, the rebbe preached, and we cried, tears pouring from our eyes, and we prayed honestly (no skipping), and we beat our breasts because we had sinned, and we cried, we cried, and repented.

* * *

My fantasy has been dreadfully lively ever since I was a child. Houses looked like cities to me, dungheaps were countries, trees people, girls princesses, rich boys princes, grass soldiers, burrs and nettles Philistines, Edom and Moab, and I used to engage them in battle (see my "Shevuot Greens").

* * *

To pick up the comical in everything and every person—that was almost a sickness I suffered from. Unintentionally, I used to imitate every single thing—beginning with my rebbe, Reb Zerach, Reb Zerach's wife and the little Zerachs, going on to my school chums and their parents, and all the way down to Baruch Ber, the town drunk and (*mutatis mutandis*) Onisko, the Gentile watchman, he of the crooked legs. This trick of imitating people kept my face well slapped all day. In the one-room cheder I was "the pest" (The Comedian). Everybody used to laugh, laugh themselves sick, fit to die, except me. At home, my mother, taking notice of my nasty behavior, undertook to tear the evil out by the roots.

There was one other lad in town just like me when it came to pretending, "acting," "making faces," and the rest. His performance also included singing wonderfully lovely songs. He was Meir, the rabbi's son, who later became famous as a performer under the name of Meir Medvediev. He knew the dramatic art even then, when he went around barefoot singing beautiful songs for a grosz or half an apple. (I remember one song with the lines: "As I went walking down Vilna Street way, I heard a loud voice cry: Oy, vay!") We two, Meir Medvediev and I, played "The Robber"—a drama of our own composition. Meir was the robber, I was the poor Jew, I fell on my knees before Meir, the robber, pleading "What do you have against me? I'm only a poor Jew, just a pauper! Have pity on my wife and children!" The robber (Meir), flourishing a butcher's knife, sang a song with a very pretty sentiment: It seems he had to—oh, he just had to, he couldn't help it—he just had to slaughter every Jew he met!

* * *

However spoiled and poorly brought up we may have been, I had so deep a love of animals that the sight of a sick horse made me desperately unhappy (as in my story "Methusaleh"). A dog with a broken leg sent me into tears (see "Rabtshik"). I even loved cats, despite the fact that they are considered unclean, like reptiles. I need not mention the hold that poor, sick children had on my sympathies (see "Creature").

* * *

Remarkably enough, I was inspired with the urge to write by my rebbe's, Reb Zerach's, extraordinarily fine handwriting. For a good "script" Father rewarded us children with a grosz (The First "Honorarium"). I sewed together a small book to show off my script; while I was at it, I wrote ("composed") an entire treatise on the Bible and grammar. When I showed it to Father, he was struck with wonder at this opus. For a long time he carried it with him in his pocket wherever he went, showing everyone he met the beauty of his son's writing (I was ten at the time), how well versed he was in the Bible, and how good a grasp he had of grammar. To this our neighbor, a Hasid with a Van Dyke, Reb Izak by name, who used to howl like a cat during prayers, responded: "Grammar, shmammer! The main thing is the handwriting. A golden script!" (The First Critique).

I was attracted to the intellectual and spiritual order of things, to works of imagination, of song (see my novel *Yosele Solevay*), of drama (*Stempeniyu*). After I was Bar Mitzvah I began playing the fiddle surreptitiously—I got it good and proper from Father for that piece of nonsense (see "On the Fiddle").

Turning poor, we moved from Voronko back to Pereyaslev. There we had our first frock coats made, with a split in the back. And when Mother died (of cholera), Father put us in the secular state school, where I showed my true colors. I was talented; right off, at the age of fifteen, after finishing the first full-sized book I ever read, I produced

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a *Robinson Crusoe* of my own, entitled (appropriately): "The Jewish Robinson Crusoe." This I showed to my Father, who in turn showed it to his guests (we had an inn), and they were all beside themselves with admiration!

From that time forth, Father regarded me as a precious stone. Taking me out of my stepmother's keeping, he forbade her to beat me, or to assign me to rocking her babies to sleep, or to chopping raisins (we had a wine cellar). Father further released me from shining the boots of our guests, putting up the samovar, running errands, and such-like occupations with which my time was previously full.

During the period between my seventeenth and my twenty-first years, until I began to study (I wanted to become a state rabbi), I read a very, very great deal, and wrote even more. I wrote whatever I read: songs, poems, novels, any number of plays, and plain "articles," just for the fun of writing. I sent my "works" to all of the Jewish and Gentile editors (I wrote in both Hebrew and Russian). Thanks to me, all the editorial offices were well supplied with fuel to stoke their ovens. . . . Eventually, *Ha-melitz* did print a couple of my "essays" along with a comment by the editor (in small type) and in the euphemistic Hebrew of the day: "Thou hast a gift for tongues. Send thy words to us, and we shall do them honor." . . . I began to write Hebrew "articles" by the ton, whole wagonfuls—but they wouldn't "do them honor," I don't know why! . . .

* * *

"And it came to pass"— in 1883 a Yiddish paper appeared, the first Yiddish-language paper (*Folksblat*, published by Alexander Cedarbaum), and, seeing as how the Gentiles didn't want to print my "novels" and "dramas" in Russian, and my Hebrew "articles" sat around with none to "do them honor," as a curiosity I tried to write something in the ordinary vernacular, the language "as she is spoke"—like Mendele Mocher Seforim, whose books had come into my hands at the time. And, just imagine, the *Folksblat* accepted it, the editor himself, Cedarbaum, writing me a letter with his own hand, asking me (you hear? *asking* me) to write more. From that time I began contributing columns to the *Folksblat*, and the more I submitted, the more they wanted. Besides, Mordecai Spector stepped in. A contributor to the *Folksblat* himself, he has, to this day, never stopped encouraging me to write. Still, writing was more like play to me at that time—until the "Pocket Knife" episode, which created a revolution in my way of writing, and in my way of life, too.

* * *

I was in business at that time, playing the stock market, speculating on paper profits, and other affairs that have nothing whatsoever to do with literature. I was completely engrossed in getting rich quick. I wanted to make a million, and would probably have kept at it, if something hadn't happened to steer me off that path—maybe it was the *right* path. . . . Anyway, I had come to the big city, Kiev, on various important business affairs. Tired out after a day spent running around, I lay down to sleep, but couldn't. So I got up, sat at the desk and wrote—no, I didn't write, but the thing poured out of me. It was a memoir from my years in the cheder. ""The Pocket Knife," I called it. I sent it off to the editor, and forgot about it.

One day, I was reading the *Woshod* when I came across a review of current literature by "Criticum" (Dubnow). He talked about a number of trifles, including my "Pocket Knife." With beating heart I read Criticum's few lines warmly praising my "Pocket Knife" and predicting that the story's youthful author, who obviously had considerable talent, would some day enrich our unfairly neglected Yiddish jargon literature.

With tears of joy and gratitude I re-read these words by the generous Criticum over and over. Then and there I swore that I would write on in that vein. Those few, warm, good, true words still stand before my eyes; whenever I finish a new thing, I never fail to ask myself: "What would Criticum say to this?" . . .

Afterward, I lost my money, but I kept my resolution. The pen is firmly fixed in my hand! Should I thank the good Criticum for that? Or—God forbid! ought I do the opposite? . . . I am not the one to say. I have reached the stage in my disease (writing) where I hardly belong to myself or to my family—rather to our literature and to that great household called the public. . . .

Kiev, Succoth, 5664 (1904).

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE BIBLE, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND HISTORY

Have the Excavations Corroborated Scripture?

JACOB J. FINKELSTEIN

THE lay reader who keeps abreast of the output of popular and semi-popular books on the subject of the Bible and Biblical archaeology, as well as the specialist working in these or related fields, cannot but be struck by a pronounced new trend reflected in a large part of the recent literature: the presentation of archaeological evidence as corroborating the Bible's historicity. In other words, there is a marked tendency to treat the Bible as a wholly reliable record of events, exactly like a primary source in any other branch of historical inquiry. We may exclude such treatments of this theme which are frankly addressed to religiously committed audiences, usually under the sponsorship of fundamentalist or orthodox groups, and which boldly impress the impartial testimony of archaeological discovery into the service of doctrines and beliefs about the Bible that were held before such discoveries were made. What I am concerned with here are books which appeal to the public on an allegedly non-sectarian and even on a non-religious basis. For if the Bible can be shown to be "history" on a presumably scientific basis, it is obviously a matter of the first importance to all people, theist and atheist alike. The best-known example of the kind of book I have in mind is *The Bible as History* of one Werner Keller, originally appearing in Germany but published in this country five years ago amid much publicity, which purported to demonstrate with finality the literal accuracy of Biblical tradition as corroborated by archaeology. Whatever Keller's qualifications were for writing a book of this kind, firsthand acquaintance with the subject was not one of them. His inaccuracies and misrepresentations were pointed out in responsible reviews, including one by Nelson Glueck—whose new volume forms the basis of the present remarks—in the New York *Times* (October 28, 1956). But other books dedicated to the same thesis have appeared in the last few years.

One of the first questions that comes to mind in pondering this new thesis is why the "discovery" was not made earlier. After all, explorations have been going on in Palestine and its surrounding areas for about a hundred years. The men engaged in these activities were for the most part devout Christians, often clergymen, and they were ever at pains to keep the general public abreast of the implications of their discoveries for Biblical history, as anyone familiar with the literature on this subject for the last hundred years is aware. Yet in all this literature, popular as well as scholarly, the claim that archaeology proved the historicity of the Bible is hardly ever emphasized. I need cite only the best known volume of this type, G. A. Barton's *Archaeology and the Bible,* published by the American Sunday School Union for use by Protestant seminaries, Sunday schools, and the Protestant laity in general, which went through seven revisions and editions from 1916 to 1937 in order to keep up with the latest results of scholarly investigation. Are we to infer that the scholars of this period were so uniformly obtuse that they failed to draw the most obvious as well as the most important conclusion demanded by the

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WHAT kind of proof has archaeology furnished for the historical validity of the Bible? JACOB J. FINKELSTEIN here examines the problem in the light of Nelson Glueck's *Rivers in the Desert* (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy; $6.50). Dr. Finkelstein is in the department of Near Eastern Languages at Berkeley. His essay, "Bible and Babel," appeared in our November 1958 issue.

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evidence? Although, to be sure, some striking discoveries casting new light on the Bible have been made in recent years, the greater part of the "evidence" was already available to the scholars of an earlier generation. Upon closer examination of this evidence, however, it becomes apparent that there is nothing in it to warrant the recent claims made in its behalf. I shall devote the remainder of this essay to an analysis of the evidence which Nelson Glueck, the latest scholar to champion the new thesis, adduces in *Rivers in the Desert*.

DR. GLUECK, the president of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is an eminent Biblical scholar of many years' standing, whose archaeological explorations and excavations in the Transjordan, and more recently in the Negev, comprise one of the truly major contributions to the knowledge of the Biblical and post-Biblical civilizations of the Near East. The larger part of his present book is, in fact, devoted to a popular account of his various discoveries in these areas, in a style designed to attract the widest possible audience. If this were all the book were intended to be, it could simply be recommended as a straightforward account of adventure and discovery which is perennially appealing to the general reading public, with the added attraction, in this case, that the discoveries are related to the Bible and Biblical history. But this is by no means the case. Dr. Glueck utilizes this account as a frame for a much more ambitious design, namely, as a demonstration of the historicity of the Bible. This theme is the *leitmotif* throughout the book. In his own words—which he repeats with minor variations at different points along the way: "it may be stated *categorically** that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference" (p. 31). Or again, in his work he relies "heavily upon the *almost incredibly accurate historical memory* of the Bible, and particularly so when it is fortified by archaeological fact" (p. 68). Although Dr. Glueck is an ordained rabbi, the authority with which he pronounces these broad claims—they constitute in fact the most extreme statement of the new thesis that I have yet seen—is not that of religious conviction but of a scholar of recognized standing. This makes the new thesis a matter of the most serious moment for all those who are concerned with the history of civilization regardless of their religious commitment.

But before proceeding further, I will take the liberty—as an initiate in a related discipline—of narrowing the scope of Dr. Glueck's categorical statements cited above in a way that I feel sure Dr. Glueck means them to be understood, although he does not make this clear. I am certain, for instance, that the thesis of historicity of the Bible is not meant to apply to the Creation and Flood legends in Genesis.

Nor does the thesis deserve examination so far as Dr. Glueck means it to apply to the Historical books, beginning with Judges. If he did, the new thesis would have to be dismissed as saying nothing really new. No school of Biblical criticism since the beginning of scientific investigation of the Bible, including the most extreme exponents of the Higher Criticism, has ever doubted the essential truthfulness of the events related in the historical books of the Bible, especially in the light of all the evidence provided for the period by the cuneiform records of Assyria and Babylonia.

I am fairly certain, too, that Dr. Glueck did not intend his statements to apply to certain books of the Hagiographa, for example, the book of Esther. As a result of the knowledge of the Persian Empire and its administration accumulated over the last century, most scholars have concluded that the book of Esther, whatever its original purpose and despite some obvious acquaintance of its author with the terms of Persian administration, is essentially a work of fiction which dates from a period much later than that in which its story is set. The absence of this book alone, among all the books of the Old Testament, in the library of the Dead Sea Scrolls, has lent strong support to this conclusion.

In short, I think that what Dr. Glueck really had in mind as "the Bible" to which his categoric statements are meant to apply, is the Hexateuch, that is, the Five Books of the Law plus Joshua; in other words, that very portion of the Old Testament which has been the real subject of analysis and contention among the Higher Critics and various other schools of Biblical criticism. Narrowing the scope of Dr. Glueck's claims even more closely, I would say that the question of historicity involves primarily the narratives about the Patriarchs in Genesis, the events associated with the figure of Moses, and the story of the conquest of Canaan as described in Joshua. It would be as

*Italics are mine throughout.

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pointless for me to disprove Dr. Glueck's thesis by citing, for example, the obviously legendary Creation and Flood narratives as it would be for Dr. Glueck to demonstrate its truth by citing almost any chapter in the book of Kings together with the extra-Biblical evidence bearing on it. Nevertheless, Dr. Glueck's failure to define his terms of reference in this basic way gives the average lay reader the impression that Dr. Glueck's thesis applies indeed to the entire Bible. For the reader with some liberal education such imprecision will have the very opposite effect of that obviously desired by the author; it can serve only to alienate him from the Bible even further than he already is.

But the really crucial question is to what extent, if any, the new thesis is valid for the Hexateuch, and what is the nature of the evidence cited in its support. It must first be acknowledged that Dr. Glueck is aware that his thesis is not to be applied literally to all parts of these Hexateuchal narratives. On page 30 he states: "The purpose of the Biblical historian and archaeologist is, however, not to 'prove' the correctness of the Bible. It is primarily a theological document, which can never be 'proved.' . . . Saga and song, legend and myth, fact and folklore were woven into the text to illustrate this central theme [the uniqueness and universality of God]. . . . The archaeological explorer in Bible lands must be aware of the fact that as important as the Bible is for historical information, it is definitely not primarily a chronicle of history, as we understand that term today." This is certainly a careful and judicious warning to those "of little faith who seek through archaeological corroboration of historical source materials in the Bible to validate its religious teachings and spiritual insights." But in the very next paragraph Dr. Glueck throws his own caution to the winds with his categorical claim that archaeology has never controverted a Biblical reference. This claim could conceivably be defended by resort to casuistry, but as a matter of plain fact it is untrue. There are many instances where archaeologically provided fact or near certainty has contradicted a Biblical statement. I shall discuss at length only one, possibly the most famous, the Fall of Jericho.

Jericho, or its ruined site, has been the subject of intensive excavation, on and off, from the early years of this century down to the present day. One of the results of all this work, known to every student of Palestinian archaeology, is the plain evidence that Joshua could not have fought the famous battle of Jericho for the simple reason that the site was uninhabited during the only period in which it is possible to fit the story of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, around the middle of the 13th century B.C.E. Dr. Glueck has many references to Jericho in his book, but beyond an oblique reference to the Israelites' "miraculous experience at Jericho" (p. 114) he does not mention the story of its conquest as described in the book of Joshua.

More instructive for our purposes, and as a revealing sidelight on the vagaries of scholarly objectivity in recent years, is the treatment of the subject by G. E. Wright, now professor at Harvard and a leading authority on Palestinian archaeology. In the first edition of the Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible (1946) he states forthrightly: "the evidence for the final fall and *abandonment* of Jericho in the previous (i.e. 14th) century is conclusive. At the present there is no final solution of this discrepancy (i.e. the age of Joshua vs. the evidence of archaeology) . . . we are led to the conclusion that Jericho fell, not to Joshua, but to relatives of Israel, etc." The vague allusion to some "relatives of Israel" is, of course, a faint-hearted stab in the direction of harmonization, but for the rest, the statement is an honest acknowledgment of the verdict of archaeology. But here are Dr. Wright's words at the same point in the new edition (1956) of the same work: "Beginning in 1952, however, a new expedition began work on the site. A redating of the major architectural remains has occurred, with the resulting conclusion that very little remains on the site from 1500 to 1200 B.C. The nature of the town or fort that existed there during the 14th and 13th centuries is something we know little about, nor can we say much about the date of its capture by Joshua." When this statement is reduced to unambiguous phraseology, it means that the most recent excavations at Jericho have proved that the violent destruction of the city occurred in the 15th century B.C.E. and not in the 14th. The earlier excavator had dated the event in the 14th century to harmonize his findings with Scripture, and moved Joshua back to the 14th century as well. (The fortifications of Jericho found by the first excavators of the site before World War I, and immediately identified as the great walls which Joshua brought tumbling down, are now

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known to be of the third millennium B.C.E., that is, more than a thousand years before Joshua!) In short, the "redating of the major architectural remains" means that the destroyed city of Jericho was a hundred years older than previously believed, and that the site remained unoccupied for at least three or four hundred years, that is, until well into the period of Israelite domination of Judea. Wright's allusion to a "town or fort" of Jericho which was captured by Joshua is a purely gratuitous one for which there is not a shred of new archaeological evidence.

What amounts to an admission of this is to be found in a still later statement by Dr. Wright in his new large work *Biblical Archaeology* (1957), where he discusses the subject of Jericho in greater detail: "The most surprising and *discouraging* result of the work so far has been the discovery that virtually nothing remains at the site between 1500 and 1200 B.C." If nothing remains on the site ("virtually" is a normal scholarly hedge), then the obvious conclusion is that it was uninhabited; the assumption that there *was* some habitation about which we know nothing is untenable. Wright's description of the findings as "discouraging" speaks volumes on the subject of scholarly detachment in the area of Biblical studies. The dictates of the new trend, which requires that every contradiction between archaeological evidence and Biblical text be harmonized to uphold the veracity of Scripture, has apparently driven Dr. Wright—in this case at least—beyond the reach of common sense.

For the explanation of the Jericho "dilemma" stares one in the face. The destruction of Jericho in the 15th century B.C.E., a city whose might and historical importance as reflected in the Bible were amply confirmed by the excavation of its site, was an event that must have created a deep impression on the surrounding population, not unlike the fall of Troy, and was remembered in later generations. At an age much later than that of Joshua, when Israelite tradition began to formulate the story of its conquest of Canaan, it was only natural that the famous episode of the fall of Jericho was incorporated in that tradition. Is it not enough that archaeology has confirmed the Biblical tradition about a disastrous destruction of Jericho—in an age, after all, not too long before Joshua—without having to corroborate other details? Surely, not even the exponents of the new trend will expect archaeology to confirm the tradition that the fortifications of Jericho tumbled down at the sound of seven trumpets. It will not do to reply to the present strictures that the verdict of archaeology is not final; that further excavation may yet disclose a city of Jericho which Joshua could have destroyed. For the same argument could be applied the other way as well; all apparent *confirmations* of Biblical tradition by archaeology could eventually be discredited by further excavation and discovery, or by better understanding of the material. This has actually happened in more than one instance in Palestine archaeology, as in the case of Jericho itself.

I HAVE chosen the Jericho episode, not only because it provides an outright contradiction to Glueck's claim that archaeology has never controverted a Biblical reference, but also because the treatment of the episode by one scholar over the course of only a decade illustrates starkly what has been happening in Biblical scholarship in recent years. The main motive that has prompted this development in Biblical scholarship is the modern reaction against the Higher Biblical Criticism, to whose crumbling archaeology has indeed contributed in large measure. (But by no means has this been entirely due to archaeology; 20th-century thought in general—whatever its own deficiencies—has succeeded in exposing the artificiality of 19th-century Hegelian and evolutionary reconstructions of history, of which the Higher Criticism was only one example.) Archaeology has demonstrated, for instance, especially through discoveries of the present generation, the authenticity of the *social and cultural milieu* of the patriarchal narratives which the Higher Criticism had discounted for the most part as late, even post-exilic, and artificial recreations. Many details of family law and customs as described in these narratives have found their exact parallels in Mesopotamian cuneiform records to the early part of the middle of the second millennium B.C.E. The very names of the Patriarchs, such as Abraham and Jacob, have been found in these records; these are, of course, not references to the Biblical personages themselves, but they prove the authenticity of these names as West Semitic or "Amorite" and as belonging to the name-repertoire current in this early period. Or again, all except the most diehard adherents of the Wellhausenian reconstruction of Israelite history now accept the Mosaic Law as essentially re-

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flecting early usage and formulation—that is, 13th century B.C.E. or even earlier—and not, as the Higher Criticism had envisaged it, a patch-quilt compilation reflecting the prejudices of much later times. The list of impressive gains in this direction which are directly due to archaeological discovery can only be suggested by these random examples.

But it is precisely at this point that the exponents of the new "Historicity School" go beyond the conclusions warranted by the evidence. None of these archaeological discoveries verifies in any way the actual historicity of the events and personages connected in the Bible with these usages and customs. To show that the patriarchal *milieu* of the Bible is authentic does *not* imply anything about the actual existence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or the events they figure in. To accept the Mosaic Law as representative of a truly early stage of Israelite society, in no way proves Moses to have been a historical figure, or to have been the actual author of the legislation associated with his name. Similarly, if many of the Psalms, which the Higher Criticism had for the most part relegated to the post-exilic period, are now known from early Canaanite parallels to go back possibly to the second millennium B.C.E., it constitutes no proof whatever that they were composed by David. The historicity of these figures and events still depends solely on the Biblical statements, and their historical status remains a question of probability and to a great degree subjective. It should be borne in mind, furthermore, that practically all the new archaeological evidence bearing on the Biblical milieu comes not from Palestine, but from other areas in the Near East, such as Mesopotamia and North Syria; it is hardly to be expected that it should have any bearing on Biblical personages and events. For my own part, I should argue that *archaeology has thus far not corroborated a single event nor authenticated the actual existence of a single personage mentioned in the first six books of the Bible.** This statement may even be taken to cover such clearly real figures as David and Solomon, for the first such figure to occur in any contemporary extra-Biblical source is Omri, king of Israel in the early 9th century B.C.E., who is mentioned in the famous inscription of Mesha, king of Moab.

*The sole exceptions to this statement are the names of the four kings (Genesis XIV:1) whom Abraham is said to have fought and vanquished.

With these considerations in view, we may turn to examine the kind of evidence adduced by Dr. Glueck to support his thesis. The "Sacrifice of Isaac" (p. 60 ff.), which Dr. Glueck treats at some length, exemplifies the variety of methods and types of "evidence" used to support the thesis, and I propose, therefore, to analyze this treatment in some detail. Dr. Glueck first situates this episode against the background of archaeological evidence which shows that, among the Canaanites, newborn infants were buried by their parents under the family hearth or under the foundations of their houses. The assumption of Dr. Glueck and others is that this represents the sacrifice of the first-born, who were thus offered to the gods as "first fruit" in order to insure the future fertility of the family. To the best of my knowledge, however, there is no evidence that these infants did not die naturally; the phenomenon may testify to the extremely high rate of infant mortality which has plagued most of the Near East to this day. There could have been any number of religious, superstitious, or even sentimental reasons why their bodies should then have been buried in or near the family dwelling. But let us for the present assume, with Dr. Glueck, that these burials do represent the ceremony he imagines to have been current. In his ensuing interpretation of Abraham's last-minute stay of Isaac's sacrifice as a gesture signalling disgust with "such a hideous ceremony," Dr. Glueck proceeds to speak of Abraham's youthful idol-smashing and his attack on idolatry without informing the reader that these iconoclastic activities of Abraham are the offspring solely of late rabbinical midrashic musing, having no basis whatever in any Scriptural passage. As a matter of fact, there is no ground for assuming that Abraham was a monotheist; all schools of thought, apart from the strict fundamentalist, are agreed that whatever the historical basis for the Patriarchal Age, its religious notions as we have them in the book of Genesis are not monotheistic. And in his eagerness to impress upon the reader the importance of Abraham's gesture as the abolition of such hideous ceremonies "forever," Dr. Glueck appears to have overlooked Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter—not *exactly* the same ceremony, but still human sacrifice—almost a thousand years later, by Dr. Glueck's own chronology of the "Abrahamitic Age."

It is, of course, unlikely that Dr. Glueck wrote this section conscious of all its implica-

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tions; he appears to have been carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment. But this is precisely the difficulty: this book, and others of the same genre, are *not* designed for spiritual edification. The dust jacket, the introductory sections, and the unquestioned competence of the author himself proclaim the contention that the book presents—on an admittedly popular level—the objective conclusions of a scholar about the nature of Biblical history and the evidence brought to bear on it by the impartial testimony of archaeological science. What, then, is the ordinary reader (unable to discriminate between proven fact and momentary fancy without a clear sign from the author himself) to make of the passage (p. 2) in which Dr. Glueck tells us of the correspondence of certain Paleolithic flint hand-axes found in the Negev with similar implements used by "Palestine Man," (a Neanderthaloid found in the Mt. Carmel caves, going back to around 50,000 B.C.E.—a detail which Dr. Glueck fails to mention): "It is possible that the very, very great grandchildren of Palestine Man, if we assume that, somehow, there were continuous lines of succession, may include such native peoples of the Negev as the Kenites, among whom Moses found himself a wife. It is conceivable that there may be a chain of unbroken connection from the prehistoric man of the cave near Mt. Carmel to Moses, the 'man of God' of Sinai and Nebo." This is, of course, a conceit, but how is the innocent reader to know this? Does Dr. Glueck hold that it is quite all right—it is, after all, on the side of the angels—if the popular mind takes that passage seriously?

But let us return to Abraham and Isaac, and follow them with Dr. Glueck to the appointed place of sacrifice. Dr. Glueck now describes the "anguish" of Abraham, and how, "distractedly, he had listened to his beloved son's chattering and answered the child's torrent of questions." When we turn to the Biblical text (Gen. 22:7-8) we find only one very sensible question put by the boy: "Here are the fire (stone) and the wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" The author has again failed to indicate to the reader that he is interpolating another piece of rabbinic midrash (which, to be sure, the story cries out for). Dr. Glueck then proceeds to what, for the purposes of his central thesis, is the crucial point of the episode. He writes: "Is there truth in this story? I believe there is! Does this place [where the sacrifice was to have taken place] exist? I believe it does." If we inquire what "truth" it is that Dr. Glueck presumes to have found in this story, we find that it is nothing more than a *possible* identification of the name of the place where the story is said to have occurred. Assuming for the moment that the identification is correct—a matter I shall presently examine—the kind of reasoning involved here amounts to precisely this: King Arthur is said in Malory's tales to have been at Dover. Dover is known to exist. Therefore there is "truth" in the story of King Arthur. Exactly what "truth" does Dr. Glueck find in the Biblical story? If it is nothing more than the fact that the place-name is authentic, then his statement is an outright tautology; his belief, or finding, that the place really exists is explicit in the second part of his statement. If he means by "truth" some extra-Biblical verification of all or part of the story, he cites no such additional evidence. Dr. Glueck's statement about finding "truth" *in* the story amounts therefore to an ambiguity that is ony compounded by the exclamation point that follows it.

But what of the identification of the place-name itself? Here Dr. Glueck characterizes as "mistaken" the commonly accepted equation of the "Land of Moriah" (the name of the place in the Sacrifice story) with the Mt. Moriah upon which, according to traditional Jewish belief, Solomon erected the First Temple at Jerusalem. This tradition goes back at least as far as the time II Chronicles 3:1 was written—the 5th or 4th century B.C.E.—and was probably current long before that time. As there is no other reference to any Moriah in the Scriptures apart from the locale of the Sacrifice of Isaac, and no extra-Biblical occurrence of this name in association with any place in Palestine, including Jerusalem, it is obvious that the Mt. Moriah of Chronicles is itself based on the "Land of Moriah"; in other words, the tradition—preserved in the Hebrew prayer-book—that the Mt. Moriah of the Temple and the "Land of Moriah" of the Sacrifice of Isaac are identical, goes back at least as far as the early post-exilic period. Dr. Glueck nevertheless postulates the existence of two "Moriahs"; one being the hill of Solomon's temple, as recorded in Chronicles, the other being the locale of Isaac's sacrifice, which Dr. Glueck claims must have been in the Sinai-Negev border region "in the neighborhood of Kadesh-Barnea." This alleged existence of a southern Moriah,

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which lacks the sanction even of tradition, is built up by Dr. Glueck on the basis of a most labored comparison of various names—too involved and inconclusive to be described here—none of which is shown to have any etymological relationship, let alone resemblance, to the name "Moriah." Apparently aware that this chain of comparisons is none too convincing, Dr. Glueck falls back circuitously on his thesis by saying: "The remarkable historical memory of the Bible seems to indicate this" (p. 64).

Why does Dr. Glueck feel compelled to dispute the traditional association of the "Land of Moriah" with the "Mt. Moriah" of Chronicles? The reason, in his own words, is that "it would not have been necessary for Abraham for days on end (the Bible states explicitly that he arrived at the spot on the third day!) to drag a supply of kindling with him for the altar fire had his mission been to the wooded hills of Judah (i.e. the vicinity of later Jerusalem)." Dr. Glueck, in other words, is troubled by the vision of Abraham carrying coals to Newcastle, if the traditional location of Moriah at Jerusalem is allowed to stand. As if the storyteller—at an age at least a thousand years later than Abraham, by Dr. Glueck's own calculations—would have stopped to consider the "incongruity" in Abraham's bringing firewood to a place where there was already a plentiful supply of it. And precisely this trivial "incongruity" is what sets Dr. Glueck off on his search for a "Moriah" in the barren Sinai-Negev area where, of course, the bringing of firewood from the outside makes more sense. In his eagerness to find some clue that might demonstrate the historicity of the story, he has here disregarded his own previous warning to Biblical scholars not to treat such narratives literally. But having done so, he has entangled himself in a greater contradiction than the imaginary one he has attempted to explain. For the place where he imagines this southern "Moriah" to be located is almost fifty miles, as the crow flies, from Beersheba, Abraham's point of departure. Dr. Glueck himself, in speaking of the difficulty of traversing the Negev terrain, writes that "even swift and unencumbered travellers cannot cross the length of the Negev except in many strenuous days." How then could Abraham's party have managed such a distance in three days or less on foot? (The Biblical text speaks of only one animal, an ass, which presumably carried the equipment and supplies.) Not that the distance from Beersheba to Jerusalem is appreciably shorter; if we were to be as literal as Dr. Glueck about the story we should have to conclude that neither Jerusalem nor Kadesh-barnea could really have been the locale of the hill or the land of Moriah. To be truthful, there is no way of ascertaining the real location of Moriah, *nor is it a matter of any importance whatever.* What *is* important is that as far back as tradition can be traced, in other words, after the legends about the patriarch Abraham had assumed a more or less canonical form, the Israelites—or perhaps more specifically the writers of the Judean Kingdom—began to associate the location of the Sacrifice of Isaac with the sanctuary at Jerusalem, a very natural tendency designed to enhance the prestige of that city as the sole authorized center of the Jewish cult. A precisely parallel tradition developed in the full light of history when Mohammed placed the seal of Islamic approval on the pagan pilgrimage to the Ka'aba at Mecca by announcing that it was Abraham and Ishmael who had originally hallowed the spot and had inaugurated the pilgrimage rites associated with it. The ingenuity expended here in trying to square a legendary tale with history strikes one as utterly misplaced.

But let us suppose once more that a place called "Moriah" was actually found in the Negev at a location in keeping with the setting of the Biblical episode. What possible bearing could such a discovery then have on the historicity of the story? It is, nevertheless, primarily on the basis of such place names that Glueck and others proclaim their newly found evidence for the historicity of the Biblical narratives. But these are no "new discoveries." Never during the entire past century or more of scientific investigation in Palestine and elsewhere in the Near East was it ever suggested that the topographical and onomastic references in the Bible were wrong or fictitious even by the extreme exponents of the Higher Criticism, or, for that matter, even in the "exposés" of the Bible by modern atheists. One gets the impression, reading Dr. Glueck, that such references in the Bible supply a rich vein of evidence which had remained neglected by explorers and archaeologists until very recently, and that thanks only to this ostensibly new approach—Dr. Glueck has been referring popularly to the Bible in this context as a "divining rod"—has the "historical accuracy" of the Bible been securely established.

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Here, for instance, is how Dr. Glueck describes his own approach to the discovery of Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Aqaba: "The whereabouts of Solomon's long-lost port city of Ezion-geber was for centuries an unfathomable mystery, because no one paid attention to the Biblical statement that it was located 'beside Eloth, or on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom' (I Kings 9:26; 10:22). And that is exactly where we found it. . . . Memory of its location had been snuffed out like the flame of a gutted candle. Assuming, however, as we did, that the Biblical statement was literally correct, it was not too difficult to discover it" (p. 31f.). Now there are at least three straw men set up in this brief passage, whom the author then proceeds to mow down. I do not mean to detract in any way from the importance of Dr. Glueck's discovery and excavation for our knowledge of the area in Biblical times. But his way of stating things appears to me to be unjustified and misleading. First is his reference to Ezion-geber as "Solomon's long-lost city." The reader immediately gets the impression that scholars and explorers had been searching for this particular city, which, in contrast with most other Biblical cities, was "lost." As a matter of plain fact, however, Ezion-geber was no more "lost" than virtually all the sites of ancient cities in the Near East. Almost all of these places were ultimately reduced to low, flat-topped hillocks (known as *tells* in the Near East) including, for example, such cities in Palestine at least as important as Ezion-geber as Megiddo and Lachish, and the more famous Nineveh and Babylon in Iraq. None of these places was really "lost" because, until the 19th century, nobody was looking for them, at least not in any systematic way. Not everything "found" has first to be "lost"; Australia was not "lost" before the voyage of Captain Cook, nor was America "lost" before Columbus.

The second straw man, related to the first, is the "unfathomable mystery." Now a "mystery" cannot be said to exist before there is some consciousness of a problem, and the attempt to find a solution for it proves unfruitful. No more "mystery" surrounded the whereabouts of Ezion-geber before Dr. Glueck's excavation of the site than almost any other site in Palestine before its excavation or exploration. As a matter of fact, I cannot recall offhand any ancient Israelite city whose whereabouts could be described as a mystery, but a good example of such a bonafide "mystery" is the ancient Semitic capital of Akkad in Babylonia, whose location has indeed been sought by modern explorers without success.

The third and most important straw man is to be found in Dr. Glueck's allegation that he was able to solve the "mystery" of Ezion-geber because he assumed "that the Biblical statement [about its location] was literally correct," while his predecessors presumably disregarded such references. Implicit in this sentence is the entire basis for the newly proclaimed thesis about the historical accuracy of the Bible. For it follows *immediately* upon his categorical statement of it which I quoted earlier, and is obviously meant to illustrate it. Reading this, the impression is inevitable that earlier archaeologists and explorers had failed to place as much credence in the Biblical references as more recent researchers do, and as a consequence were unable to appreciate how accurate and trustworthy the Bible really is. But the fact is that every explorer and archaeologist who has ever worked in Palestine, skeptic as well as fundamentalist, has relied heavily on the topographical information in the Bible *as a matter of course*. It would never have occurred to any of them to suspect that such information would have been invented, and this was not a matter of faith but of common sense. Events and persons might be fictitious or legendary, but the locales of such stories are usually authentic enough, as in the case of the Arthur legends. In his three-volume account, *Biblical Researches in Palestine* (1841), the famed founder of Palestinian exploration, Edward Robinson, describes the method of identifying ancient sites which he used on his journeys: "To examine everywhere for ourselves with the Scriptures [in Hebrew, Greek, and English]; and to apply for information solely to the native Arab population." The Arab names of places often contained at least an echo of the Biblical one, and the topographical indications in the Bible often helped to confirm the identity of a site. By this method Robinson identified the location of scores of Biblical cities, a great many of which were confirmed by later excavation, some even in very recent years. Robinson and all those who followed him, using the same methods—albeit with increasing refinement and better technical equipment—did not consider the accord of the modern with Biblical topographical information in any way extraordinary, nor did

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they draw any conclusions from it about the veracity of the Biblical stories and personalities associated with these places. Of course, Robinson himself, as well as some of the later explorers, believed firmly in the literal truth of all Biblical narratives. No need was felt by such people to demonstrate by scientific means what was believed as a matter of faith. It was enough for him to have re-discovered (or think he had) the places mentioned in the Bible by what were for his day objective means. He probably would have scoffed at being shown artifacts purported to be associated with Biblical characters and events. It was precisely because of his skepticism of such traditional manifestations of pious credulity that he undertook his researches in the first place. His first principle, in his own words, was "to avoid as far as possible all contact with the convents and the authority of the monks." When, in later decades, the literal truth of the Bible began to be doubted in many—including religious—quarters, the fundamental reliability of Biblical topographical information was never questioned, except as it came to be realized that a Biblical author could sometimes make as honest a mistake as a modern one.

It is plain, in short, that from the beginning of Palestine exploration down to the present day, the topographical information of the Bible has consistently been used as a primary tool for the identification of ancient sites. But never before recent years was this universally accepted usage appealed to as evidence for the truth or accuracy of the Bible as a whole. It is perhaps significant in this connection that Dr. Glueck, whose chief exploration tool, by his own account, is the same repertoire of Biblical information utilized by all his predecessors, never once mentions Robinson, who first demonstrated the reliability of the tool, nor any of the other early giants of Palestinian exploration who used it to such profitable account.

If all Dr. Glueck intended by his thesis was to dramatize the fact that the Bible has proved to be a reliable guide in the exploration of Palestine, much that I have written here would be beside the point. The book would then have amounted to a reaffirmation of what has been accepted and used as a matter of course for more than a hundred years, together with a popular account of Dr. Glueck's application of this tried and trusted technique in areas which had remained relatively neglected before his own researches. But the entire book is really meant to illustrate a more ambitious thesis, and the few examples I have chosen for analysis exemplify his approach throughout. There is something behind this insistence on the historicity of the Bible just because the places mentioned in it are authentic which I find particularly disturbing. My uneasiness has to do with the apparent readiness of an influential number of Biblical scholars to enlist the substantial gains made during recent decades in our knowledge of Israelite and Biblical history—perhaps unintentionally—in the current campaign to sell the public on a 1959-model piety incorporating all the latest scientific gadgets. By stamping the Bible with the approval of scientific authority, an accommodation is ostensibly achieved with the popular faith in science—a faith that must progressively deepen as the realm of science recedes ever further from the horizon of general comprehension; but this is merely to ally the Bible and God with the other shibboleths of our time. At this point, however, I am leaving the area of my own limited competence.

I would close, however, with a kind of plea. We shall always have with us the third- and fourth-hand popularizers who will pound and mash significant additions to the fund of knowledge into an amorphous and misleading pablum for the consumption of the semi-literate. The field of Biblical history and archaeology has had more than its fair share of such treatment. But it is quite another thing for reputed scholars in the field to lend their own prestige and authority to similar endeavors. These words may strike one as unduly severe, but I believe that the first responsibility of such scholars after the requirements of their own researches is to inform the truly literate portion of the general public, limited in numbers though it may be, of the very substantial gains made in recent decades toward our understanding of the Bible and the world of which it was a part. And this must be done in a way that can inspire the confidence of the educated lay public in the methods and critical standards of Biblical scholarship. Only in this way can the true historical value of the Bible as an important landmark in the odyssey of mankind be made to stand out boldly and unambiguously, and to become a source of reliable information—and inspiration—even for those who are not committed to the religious conceptions set forth in it.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Conservative Historians

To the Editor of Commentary:

I thoroughly enjoyed John Higham's article on Daniel J. Boorstin and "The Cult of the 'American Consensus'" (February). He has caught the new conservatives in the act of homogenizing American history, of substituting a unitary view of our past for the old progressive dualism. But he has also validated the claim of Boorstin's publisher that *The Americans* (as the leading vehicle of the new conservative interpretation) is "the first major reinterpretation of American history since Turner, Parrington, and Beard."

The new trend of American historiography is significant: it reflects a broad national tendency toward political moderation and homogeneity, a phenomenon commented upon, for example, by Dennis H. Wrong in "The Perils of Political Moderation" (January). Boorstin is clearly rewriting American history in the image of the present generation, just as the great progressive historians rewrote it in the image of theirs. I find it difficult to understand why Higham concludes that *The Americans* is "a collection of sparkling fragments *rather* than an enduring monument, a fascinating miscellany *rather* than a grand achievement." The great interpretive histories have usually been both. On Higham's own evidence *The Americans* is likely to stand as an enduring monument to the vigor and originality of mid-century pragmatic conservatism.

Keith B. Berwick

Williamsburg, Virginia

Perspective on Bronxville

To the Editor of Commentary:

As a Jew with a Bronxville, New York, Post Office address, I thought your readers might be interested in some of my own observations of the town described by Harry Gersh in "Gentlemen's Agreement in Bronxville" (February). As Mr. Gersh shows, Jews are excluded from home ownership within the "Holy Square Mile." But there is a very fluid situation on the periphery of Bronxville. Mr. Gersh presented a black-and-white indictment which is quite accurate; but there are grays in the picture as well.

The *1959 Guide for Bronxville,* published by the Bronxville Chamber of Commerce, contains a complete listing of residents in the area; my own name is one of nine Cohens listed. The impartiality of listings and the availability of advertising space to all businesses, regardless of the religious affiliation of the proprietors, are a credit to the Bronxville business community. . . . The *Guide* also reveals that there are some Jewish-owned businesses in Bronxville. It seems that Bronxville businessmen have a different attitude from those who control [real estate].

I live in an apartment-house co-op located at the intersection of Yonkers, Tuckahoe, and Bronxville. We look out across a beautifully-maintained park area at the opposite end of which are expensive Bronxville properties. Some 75 per cent of our FHA-financed co-op is occupied by Jewish families, the remaining 25 per cent by those of other faiths. The atmosphere is friendly, although socializing tends to follow denominational lines. We pay our taxes to Yonkers, take the N.Y. Central railroad at Tuckahoe, and receive our mail through the courtesy of the Bronxville Post Office. We use the same park, and when the river freezes over we skate on the same ice.

When our children enlist in the Boy Scouts, it is at the Bronxville Cabin, the nearest scout facility. Award night at the scouts reads somewhat like "a Fourth of July orator's dream" (to borrow Mr. Gersh's phrase), and a small number of Jews are among those scouts regularly honored. Scouting in Bronxville is community-sponsored, without regard to church affiliation. As a parent, I have appeared at various scout meetings open to parents, but among the adults there was little communication. I would have been interested in functioning on an adult committee (I had spent three years as a Cubmaster in a previous community), but I wasn't asked, and I never felt free to volunteer. . . . But my son experienced no intolerance while he was a scout.

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Schooling for our youngsters is at "Bronxville 8," a Yonkers school with a Bronxville tag. Its traditions are difficult for the Jewish students. Christmas pageants along religious lines are strongly entrenched; and, despite an increasing number of Jewish students, some teachers insist that the Jewish children participate. . . .

On the other hand, the Bronxville library, the best in the area, provided us with a pleasant surprise: the so-called Hayward Collection, which contains some 250 books dealing on Jewish subjects, including works by Salo W. Baron, Louis Finkelstein, Cyrus Adler, Judah L. Magnes, and even Theodore Herzl's *The Jewish State*. . . . According to the *Reporter*, a local newspaper, "in 1938, the Misses Hayward presented $700 to the library for the purchase of books honoring the Jewish Race. The gift was designed as a protest against Adolf Hitler and was in memory of their father, Richard Hayward, first rector of Christ Church, a Christian priest who as such possessed a Jewish heritage, and their brother, Robert Otis." More recently, the same two sisters established a parallel collection which concerns itself with the colored peoples. . . . Recently, my wife was present when Mr. James G. McDonald, the first U.S. Ambassador to Israel and a resident of Bronxville, presented an armful of issues of COMMENTARY to the library. . . .

Courses in adult education are offered at the Bronxville High School. I registered for one such course, "How to Invest"; it was attended predominantly by middle-aged women, and there was none of the communication that often takes place among Jews in adult education classes. But there was nothing that could be interpreted as intolerance, either.

We occasionally shop in Bronxville. I find the general atmosphere in the stores somewhat alien; but there are a number of Jewish shopkeepers, among them a personal friend who told us that he had received cooperation from the Chamber of Commerce and the Bank in setting up his business. He performs a needed service and is doing well. . . .

I checked Mr. Gersh's story of real-estate restrictions within the incorporated village of Bronxville, and found his claims verified in a booklet about the Bronxville and Lawrence Properties, printed by the Lawrence office. Some excerpts follow: "The wise restrictions and sound development program laid down by William V. Lawrence half a century ago have been scrupulously carried forward by his heirs, both in the sale of residential properties and in the careful selection of tenants for the sixty splendid apartment groups. . . ." "Bronxville is actually a country village that has retained all its tranquil charm through planned growth and wise restrictions. . . ." "Ownership-management provides the highest service standards, and rigid social and financial restrictions assure desirable neighbors. . . ."

Mr. Gersh questions whether the same William Van Duzer Lawrence who founded the liberal Sarah Lawrence College could have fathered a policy of restriction. According to his heirs, he did.

I am not a social scientist, and so cannot evaluate with any authority my own experiences and those of my fellow Jews in suburbia. Nevertheless, it is difficult for me to envision the Holy Square Mile forever resisting the onslaught of the new America that so vigorously surrounds it.

DAVID L. COHEN

Bronxville, N.Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Further proof of the charge that COMMENTARY "makes a mountain out of a molehill," made by one of your readers in the "Letters" section of your February number, can be found in the very same number, in which seven valuable pages were devoted to shedding tears over community discrimination in Bronxville ("Gentlemen's Agreement in Bronxville," by Harry Gersh). I am sure that millions of Jews would gladly endure this ostracism and live happy and fruitful lives ouside the *Gan Eden* of Bronxville. . . . Would it not be possible for your magazine to deal with more serious problems, for example the brazen economic discrimination practiced in New York City and elsewhere against would-be Jewish job applicants? Here is something which hits one as a Jew right between the teeth—the denial of one's right to earn a living. As for buying a house in Bronxville, the issue might have provided good copy for an article by Mr. Gersh, but neither I nor your other readers, I hope, can take the matter very seriously. . . .

DAVID ANTMAN

New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Israel's Prime Minister

BEN GURION: THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN. By ROBERT ST. JOHN. Doubleday. 336 pp. $3.95.

Reviewed by A. V. SHERMAN

A WELL-WRITTEN biography of David Ben Gurion would make fascinating reading, and would be of far more than purely Jewish or "current affairs" interest. The task calls for a biographer of considerable erudition and talent, able to work comfortably in half a dozen languages, familiar with the history of three empires (Russian, Turkish, British) in the period of their dissolution, and conversant with the doctrinal disputes of socialism, Zionism, and their various hybrids. He would require independence of judgment and strong nerves, to withstand the various pressures against "washing dirty linen in public" which make most of what is published about Israel propagandist rather than scholarly.

Mr. St. John's book, I fear, is something of a caricature of the faults the future biographer will have to avoid. The author has relied on the "Establishment" for his data, as his list of acknowledgments shows: the Prime Minister's immediate entourage, Israeli public relations officials, foreign service officers, and notables of Ben Gurion's own party form the overwhelming majority. He has not taken the trouble to elicit dissenting viewpoints, whether he deals with disputes between Ben Gurion and Petah Tikvah farmers fifty years ago or last year's clashes in Parliament. He has, moreover, had no access to Hebrew-language sources.

The result is propaganda, hero worship, served up in *Time-Life* style journalese with lashings of "inspired and inspiring" writing (to use the dust-jacket's phrase): "This was Ben Gurion the prophet, direct lineal descendant of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obediah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi." (The reader will wonder whether Mr. St. John had some reason for omitting Ezekiel or whether it was just an oversight.) "Ben Gurion is a man of many paradoxes. He is a three-dimensional [sic] man, living simultaneously in the past, the present, and the future." "Ben Gurion's mind is like an adjustable [sic] spotlight. It focuses on a single object with a bright beam, illuminating the most obscure corners."

The reasonably well-informed reader will be able to pick out innumerable errors of fact, from the statement in the first chapter that Herzl went to Paris to "cover the Dreyfus spy case" to the account of the "German equipment" crisis with which the book ends. Worse still are the omissions of important aspects of recent Israeli politics, in particular the long and bitter feud between Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharett (which is still running strong), the reasons Ben Gurion retired to Sde Boker and the reasons he came back, the break-up of the coalition with the General Zionists in 1955 and its various causes. It is charitable to assume that his informants failed to tell Mr. St. John about these episodes.

Were this book the only one of its kind, it would scarcely deserve comment, but the fact that so many books on Israel are propagandist, brash, and ill-informed is disturbing. In part, this reflects the highly charged emotional atmosphere in which Zionism still operates, as well as the fear that more objective presentation might discourage enthusiasm or the fund-raising on which the state has become accustomed to lean. In part, it helps bolster political morale inside Israel, in the face of a growing feeling that something is seriously wrong. It also meets the need of Western middle classes, Jews in particular, to believe in some utopia or never-never land in which the normal laws of society are suspended, life has no seamy side, and people are motivated by ideas and ideals rather than by interests and prejudices.

In the short run, this state of affairs may be convenient to the Israeli and Zionist leaders, but in the long run it seems likely to do Israel

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more harm than good. For one thing, violent love affairs with never-never lands on the part of Western middle-class people usually lead to equally violent disillusion. Moreover, uncritical adulation helps put off the day when Israel will have to learn to grow up and pay its way, instead of expecting to be treated as an eternal infant prodigy among the nations.

THE pity of a book like St. John's is that it obscures an extremely interesting political career which might serve as an object lesson in the problems of political democracy and social organization in the less advanced countries. Ben Gurion is no messiah or prophet; nor is he an original political thinker, as a glance at his writings will discover; and it is pure "personality cult" to try to present him as a philosopher. He is, however, an extremely talented practical politician who helped shape and lead one of the few nationalist movements of this century which developed along democratic lines after achieving statehood.

Ben Gurion worked through the Israeli party system—indeed, he made it work. The system is cumbersome and wasteful; because more than 70 per cent of the national income is generated or distributed by party-controlled institutions, politics is the main avenue of personal advancement, and patronage permeates the workings of society. Ben Gurion might have set himself above the party system on several occasions. He could have appealed to the public at large, over the heads of his party and government coalition, on issues of national defense where the public has always been more militant than the politicians. Had he done so, the party system itself would have disintegrated. Or he might have exercised one-man rule through his direct personal control of the army, police, and security services. In either case, there is little doubt that he could have gotten away with it.

Ben Gurion preferred, however, to make party democracy (the only kind of democracy we know) work. It has required extraordinary tactical skill, patience, strong nerves, and a keen instinct for what is possible at any given time. It has also involved sweeping concessions on what he considers to be non-essentials, including economic questions. It is a considerable achievement, though whether it will long survive him or whether it can manage without massive economic aid from abroad, is another matter. By the time the definitive biography is written, we should have a clearer picture.

A Major Novelist

JUSTINE. By LAWRENCE DURRELL. Dutton. 253 pp. $3.50.
BALTHAZAR. By LAWRENCE DURRELL. Dutton. 250 pp. $3.50.
MOUNTOLIVE. By LAWRENCE DURRELL. Dutton. 318 pp. $3.95.
ESPRIT DE CORPS. By LAWRENCE DURRELL. Dutton. 104 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by R. W. FLINT

WHEN Lawrence Durrell's *Justine* appeared in 1957, I wondered why, with the exception of Howard Nemerov, none of our major critics had anything to say. Now, after the publication of *Balthazar* and *Mountolive,* two of the three projected "sibling" novels to *Justine,* I can better understand the silence. The temptation to say merely that Durrell sometimes writes extremely well and sometimes not so well, and let it go at that, is almost, but not quite, overwhelming.

Many readers will recall Durrell's *Black Book* of 1938, an amusing, highly intellectual *tour de force* which provoked one of T. S. Eliot's crushingly emphatic encomia—"The first piece of work by a new English writer to give me any hope for the future of prose fiction"—an endorsement that may, for some readers, have put it with Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* in a special class of untouchables. But Eliot has not always been wrong about fiction. The *Black Book,* though not all *that* good, now seems a natural prelude, in its exuberance and learning, its raffish common sense and its commonsensical raffishness, to the mature work of *Justine.* In the intervening two decades, Durrell has camouflaged himself as a rather elusive literary handyman, writing verse (occasionally very good), criticism, another journeyman novel (*Cefalu*), travel books, a verse play (*Sappho*), and a book on Cyprus (*Bitter Lemons*), serving as press attaché in the Foreign Office, teaching school in Argentina. Along with his Irish parentage and Indian upbringing, all this adds up to an exceedingly amorphous picture, one of the anomalies of which has been uncritical support from those Laurentian buccaneers, Kenneth Rexroth and Henry Miller. (Durrell was Miller's guide and companion during the *Colossus of Maroussi* visit.)

Where is the common denominator of a body of writing that can draw equal praise

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from the arch anti-Laurentian Eliot and the arch-Laurentian Rexroth? And, oddly enough, from *Time* and the *Times Literary Supplement* also, who respond to a strain of good-old-dogginess in the lesser Durrell. (*Time* particularly liked *Esprit de Corps,* an agreeable but also rather coy collection of anecdotes about diplomatic life in the Balkans, a refreshing contrast, *Time* felt, to the "steamy" atmosphere of *Justine*. I found *Esprit de Corps* passably funny but also embarrassing, as any obvious potboiler by a first-rate novelist is embarrassing.) Is there, then, a real world in Durrell, or is he only the sort of talented exile-in-residence who strikes all the chords of nostalgia without ever really composing?

There is such a world in the *Justine* books, beyond any question, but Durrell has set a trap for reviewers. None of the fine epigrammatical summaries scattered through the books, quotable as they separately are, really define the whole. The *Justine* books are, first of all, an exercise in perspective. Each character is a planet revolving in an eccentric orbit that intersects the others at surprising points. Durrell calls *Balthazar* and *Mountolive* "siblings" to *Justine* because they are complementary rather than sequential. All three share a number of characters—notably the two novelists, Darley and Pursewarden, the glamorous, passive and protean Justine, Melissa the dancing girl and Clea the neurotic painter, Nessim the rich Alexandrian Coptic businessman, Pombal the French diplomat, Scobie the racy sea-dog policeman, Balthazar the old Jewish Cabbalist, and a few others—but some of the chief actors in *Mountolive* are of no importance in *Justine* while Darley, who narrates *Justine* and *Balthazar,* dwindles into nothing in *Mountolive*. This is a genuinely new kind of fictional enterprise, *sui generis* and not easily summarized.

Indeed, Durrell has made the whole notion of plot problematic. Not that any of the novels are plotless but that with each change of perspective the plot radically alters. *Balthazar* and *Mountolive* each pick up hitherto neglected strands of action and develop them, shifting the point of view and demonstrating how, in expert hands, plot, tone, style, and point of view must all change when one of them changes. This provides a demonstration of fictional technique that recapitulates most of what we have learned about the possibilities of the novel, but so cleverly and concisely that the lesson seems fresh.

Durrell's faults are easily summarized. Most of them are a backlash, a slopping over of energies: metaphors run out of hand, needlessly multiplied analogies, repetitious descriptions. His humor is occasionally too heavy and his *sententiae* too obvious. With a few exceptions, he is weak at characterizing his people by their speech, and he lacks, as a philosophical novelist, Dostoevsky's genius for drama, for inventing situations where action and thought are indistinguishable. He works in fragments and private encounters, rarely confronting more than two or three characters at a time. The worst one can say of Durrell, I think, is that he is a genuine enthusiast, but he is blessed with an intelligence that overcomes most of the vices of enthusiasm.

ANY idea or cluster of ideas, no matter how tired it may seem, will yield a complete version of the world if explored thoroughly enough, even the ideas of moderation and non-commitment so well exploited by Robert Frost. Durrell answers Frost's famous maxim by saying, in effect: I was not a political fence-straddler in my youth for fear of being a political fence-straddler in my old age. The overt "lesson" of Frost is humane resignation; the covert, presented *matter* is the primitive wildness of things. Durrell, though as gentle a man as Frost, reverses this equation. His overt material is one with his philosophizing, exotic and extreme—all polyglot literary amorism, bed-hopping voyeurism, and jolly perversity.

What renders this sane, and distinguishes him from Paul Bowles and others of that sunburnt fraternity, is not only his "beautiful intelligence" (in Nemerov's words) and high-hearted, delicate, athletic gusto, his range and keenness of experience, but most of all, his historical imagination. On a modest scale, he belongs in the line of Thackeray, Stendhal, and Turgenev as one of the scientific chroniclers of power, one of the serious political novelists for whom nothing is more interesting than the exact equation at any time or place between imagination, power, and mind. Like Stendhal, he is a connoisseur of melodrama.

Americans usually like their melodramas straight and can easily miss the affectionate common sense at the bottom of Durrell's, for the same reason that Stendhal's *Lucien Leuwen* and Fitzgerald's *The Rich Boy,* two great naturalistic portraits of high society, are seldom read over here. To become good readers of this

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kind of fiction requires, in an equalitarian society, much solitary determination. We like to regard power as transparent, in its substance and motives, when it is often anything but.

The "new failure of nerve" controversy some years back was set off by a quotation from Gilbert Murray's study of Alexandrian religion, the fourth stage in a process of religious evolution seen by Murray as disintegration. Since then, all right-thinking American intellectuals have been supposed to be forewarned against encroachments from this mystical city of libraries, sects, neurosis, and the naked worship of power. Behind the Alexandrian bogey is doubtless a wholesome assumption that, far from providing a refuge from Moloch, the city offers merely a more refined and hence more helpless slavery. Bogey or refuge, golden bird or dirty joke, the city is still very much alive; whether you call it London, Rome, Paris, Tokyo, or Istanbul, we pay our young *laureati* to go there and luxuriously absorb its "poisons."

Granted for the moment that Alexandria is the true image of our desire, what is it like? What is the real weight of Taste, Elegance, Independence, Good Living, Philanthropy, Vision, and Culture, the idols of our Metternichian era? Have they really replaced, as we are often told, prudence, temperance, justice, and courage? What, finally, is left of Love, the great Christian nostrum? Something like this, certainly nothing less, is Durrell's subject.

Of his incidental achievements in the series so far, perhaps the most interesting is the figure of his novelist-diplomat, Pursewarden. Pursewarden hovers and comments, sometimes rather annoyingly, throughout *Justine*, eventually coming alive in *Balthazar*. Standing midway in the series, acting and suffering as intensely as he thinks, Pursewarden is the mediating figure between concrete modern Levantine history and Durrell's book-fed imagination. *Balthazar* is therefore Durrell's most intimate study of the equation between power and art. Pursewarden is eventually stripped of most of his glamor, but without—and this is a measure of Durrell's hard-headedness—ceasing to be both charming and as "tiresome" as Darley, the narrator of *Justine*, says he is. He is, to be sure, the best type of colonial, a man passionately sympathetic toward minorities and eager to protect their interests; abrupt, genial, stoical, and profane, given to writing breezy messages on mirrors with lipstick and other such hal-

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lowed shenanigans. He is also a successful novelist, though from the title of *his* series—*God Is a Humorist*—not, one is meant to infer, as good a novelist as his creator. For Pursewarden's humor has gone a bit sour. He is too weak to compose his interests, too worldly wise after the currently approved models. He is, as it were, souped up; whereas Durrell himself memorializes corruption with something of the Hyperborean gusto and the dignified professorial innocence of Yeats.

There is magnificence in these books, of design, of writing, and of imagination. There is something in them for almost every taste. With them, Durrell has become one of the half-dozen or so most interesting novelists writing in English.

The Nature of Religion

THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE. By MIRCEA ELIADE. Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask. Harcourt, Brace. 256 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT E. FITCH

THERE is matter enough in Mircea Eliade's study of *The Sacred and the Profane* to scandalize the scholar and to offend the philosopher. But the majority of discerning readers will take delight in this book. For we have here a lucid intelligence, supported by enormous erudition, expressing his views with literary art, in a volume that seduces the imagination as it provokes the intellect.

The first scandal to scholarship is that, as in Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Mr. Eliade ranges through a great variety of religions looking, not for their differences, but for their resemblances. His examples are taken from the Mesopotamians, the Indians, the Chinese, the Kwakiutl, and other primitive peoples. He is interested in finding the larger meanings which may emerge from such a synoptic view. Of course, any respectable anthropologist could tell Mr. Eliade that this sort of thing just isn't done nowadays. The current intellectual fashion prescribes that we engage in piecemeal and picayune analyses. Since the rest of us cannot get our feet off the ground, we have proved that you can't fly, anyway. But Mr. Eliade, who is chairman of the department of the history of religions at the University of Chicago, soars gracefully in contempt of the earthbound.

His exposition begins with the two basic categories of space and time. For the religious man there are the sacred places—the pillar, the hearth, the well, the stone, the mountain, the capital, the temple. And there is *the* sacred place, which is the center of the world, the navel of the cosmos. There is also sacred time—festal time, liturgical time—which is neither continuous nor homogeneous. Each particular creation has its own time; so "time gushes forth with the first appearance of a new category of existents." Sacred times, moreover, are reversible, so that ritualistically we can re-enter the time of origin and so achieve a recreation of being. Thus we may live in an "eternal mythical present."

It is toward the conclusion of this part of Mr. Eliade's exposition that we begin to wonder uneasily about Judaism and Christianity. The author has already acknowledged our difficulties, but has lightly passed them by. The first difficulty is that Judaism in its evolution comes to transcend the sacred place. Both Jerusalem and the Temple may continue as sacred memories, but the experience of exile showed that the Law could reach to the far ends of the earth. The other difficulty is that Christianity—in this respect the heir of Judaism—came to transcend the idea of a sacred time. For the Incarnation does not so much mark one sacred time as it gives a sacral character to all of time. Thus sacred times and sacred places are peripheral rather than central to these two religions.

Mr. Eliade goes on with a discussion of cosmic religion and the sacredness of nature. Here he speaks of sky, water, earth, of woman, sex, fecundity, of the cosmic tree, and the miraculous fruit. He cites the ease of the Indian chief who refused to till the ground:

"You ask me to plow the ground! Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest. You ask me to dig for stone! Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die, I cannot enter her body to be born again. You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it, and be rich like white men! But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?"

He also considers the analogy of body-house-cosmos in some detail, and informs us, among other things, that "ritual nudity implies an atemporal model, a paradisal image."

Throughout all this, the unconventional thing in his thesis is the rejection of any naturalistic

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explanations. For the religious man the sacral is prior to the natural. There is not something in sky, or stone, or sex that is intrinsically good and requires celebration. It is rather that any of these things may be the occasion of a hierophany—a manifestation of the sacred. In the introduction Mr. Eliade cites Rudolf Otto's *Idea of the Holy,* with its emphasis upon the *mysterium tremendum,* the *mysterium fascinans,* the majesty of overwhelming power, the "wholly other" quality of the numinous. The truly religious man *begins* with this feeling for the holy, and uses it to interpret his entire cosmos. He does not artificially attach the holy to some pre-existent but impressive natural function.

SOME READERS may wish to quarrel with this thesis, which appears quite early in the volume. But to this critic the most startling implication of Mr. Eliade's exposition lies in the intent, finally, to eliminate all of the great historic religions. The author confesses soon enough his difficulties with Judaism and with Christianity. About half way along we learn that the doctrine of cosmic cycles in Hinduism is a desacralized affair, emptied of religious content. Eventually we are warned that "Greece, India, China do not take the Western intellectual beyond the sphere of complex and highly developed religions with a large written sacred literature. To know some part of these sacred literatures, to become familiar with some oriental or classical mythologies does not yet suffice for a comprehension of the mental universe of *homo religiosus.*"

What, then, is this "religious man," who in effect has nothing to do with Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, Gautama, Confucius, or Zoroaster? Obviously he is something primordial, ahistorical, that existed before man began to become in any way significantly human. From the idea of the holy of this "religious man" not only must we delete any symbol of holiness as it is revealed in the historic faiths, but we must subtract those two things which Otto and all the mystics who follow him hold in contempt—i.e., man's reason and man's morality. If therefore modern man casts aside this view of the sacred, it is still a question whether he is rejecting religion, or making a first effort to discover it.

One may question the adequacy for our time of Mr. Eliade's "religious man." But that such a man once looked upon life in his own primi-

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tive way, and perhaps still peeps occasionally through the lids of a more sophisticated descendant, there can be no doubt. Mr. Eliade has written in simplicity and in beauty of the vision of that "religious man," and so has allowed us the opportunity to enlarge our own imaginations.

Islam from Within

ISLAM—THE STRAIGHT PATH. ISLAM INTERPRETED BY MUSLIMS. Edited by KENNETH W. MORGAN. Ronald Press. 453 pp. $6.00.

Reviewed by G. E. VON GRUNEBAUM

IN AN attempt "to present to Western readers the major religions of the world from the point of view of the followers of those faiths," Kenneth W. Morgan, professor of religion and director of the Division of the Humanities at Colgate University, has followed his publications on Hinduism and Buddhism with "a concise presentation of the history and spread of Islam and of the beliefs and obligations of Muslims as interpreted by outstanding Muslim scholars of our time."

The four Egyption contributors to this book deal with what may be called the universal aspects of Islam—its origin, the principal movements of ideas that shaped its development, its beliefs and canon law, and some of the interpretations of the faith which rationalists and mystics of the Golden Age proposed. The other authors concern themselves primarily with the peculiar form Islam assumed in their own culture area. The Arab lands and Africa, the countries of Turkish tongue, Persia, the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent, China and Indonesia—each is discussed by a local scholar. A statement by a second Indonesian on the problem of unity and diversity in Islam concludes a book whose authors (as the editor points out) "were aware that their fellow Muslims looked over their shoulders as they wrote."

This consciousness of writing for two audiences of different expectations is obvious to any reader; equally obvious is the fact that the authors envisaged very different kinds of Moslems as looking over their shoulders. The essays united in this book reflect, almost dramatically, the cleavage between conservatives, even fundamentalists, on the one hand, and modernistically inclined Moslems on the other. They also reflect very different levels of sophistication and knowledge which in turn can be seen as mirroring the mentality of various groups rather than the personal attainments of individuals.

The sections written by the "conservative" authors confront the Western specialist with a peculiar dilemma. Is he to judge them by their factual accuracy and allow himself to be irritated by the "styling" that the late Professor Draz or Professor Shaltout, for example, found it necessary to apply to Islamic doctrine? Is he to point out the omission of certain episodes in the life of the Prophet Mohammed that are likely to offend the sensibilities of the non-Moslem, or the prettying up of certain sides of the social life of a Moslem society? It would be easy to compile a fairly extensive list of inaccuracies or omissions of this order. But is it not more in keeping with the intentions of the authors to appraise their presentation as an exhibit, not perhaps of what Islamic ideology and mores actually are, but of what wide circles would wish them to become and hence to have been? In other words, should not the Western reader welcome descriptive deviations from the truth as a constructive program, realizing, as he must, that change can be successfully accomplished only when it is experienced as a natural outgrowth of one's own tradition, as something intended by the founder, by revelation itself, and not imposed by the foreigner or by competition with him?

If Professor Shaltout's discussion of the Moslems' relations with non-Moslems fails of historical and, so to speak, theoretical accuracy, it may yet be best to interpret his statements as a hopeful step toward a lessening of Moslem exclusivism. The description by Professor Shehabi of Teheran of the essentials of Shi'a Islam baffles by its combination of cultured elegance with a certain naivety. The dithyrambic passages on the perfection of Islam, the Prophet, and, even more, Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, who in Shi'ite eyes is his only legitimate successor as political leader of the community (not to mention the somewhat trite passages quoted from the writings that tradition attributes to him), leave the reader no doubt about the author's intensity of pious feeling but otherwise tend to make Shi'ism appear a considerably more alien, even bewildering, phenomenon than it actually is. Similarly, Professor Cantay's hymn in praise of the Turkish peoples impresses one as an uninhibited expression of a pan-Turkish nationalism, rather

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than as an account of the setting in which Islam grew to be an inalienable element of "being a Turk." With regard to all these chapters, one cannot really speak of correctness and error, for every statement is half consciously prompted by an aspiration, by a view of one's faith and one's community which is to be made to prevail among men of good will within and outside Islam; they are, at the same time, accounts and selective interpretations.

The conventional criteria of scholarship are meaningful only when applied to the work of scholars, to writers with a primarily non-theological or non-pedagogical orientation. Professor M. Siddiqi of Pakistan has some excellent pages describing the present situation of Islam in India and Pakistan in terms of its historical development; an occasional remark by him reflecting the anti-colonialism of his milieu, and a tendency to buttress his views by anachronistic interpretation of distinguished predecessors, do not in any way disfigure his clear and instructive survey. A learned paper like Professor Husaini's on Islamic culture in the Arab and African countries offers enough food for thought to invite indulgence when contemporary political passions take their toll in assigning to the West more than its fair share of responsibility for delaying the Arab cultural renaissance. Less excusable, perhaps, are his somewhat careless statements about North Africa and especially the Berbers. Scholars, too, in orientation and training, are Professor Affifi of Egypt, who has successfully accomplished the difficult task of making Moslem theology and Moslem mysticism understandable to the Westerner, and Dr. S. Ghorbal, also of Egypt, whose historical analysis of the principal intellectual motivations that have made Islam into a world religion is a remarkable accomplishment, not because of scholarly originality, which Ghorbal expressly disclaims, but because of the balanced evaluation of his tradition which inspires his efforts.

The chapters on China and Indonesia fall somewhere in between. They are written by secular-minded Moslems who, it is clear, have not made a special study of Islam—a circumstance from which the reader in a sense profits, because the authors allow themselves to describe, at fairly generous length, the popular form which their faith has taken in their communities. Their chapters are a treasure trove of religious folklore, and demonstrate how completely local life has, in the minds of the faithful, become Islamicized regardless of what the strict theologian may think of the customs practiced. At the same time the purely local character of a good many of the customs is shown

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to affect only the paraphernalia of the faith: the diversity of Moslem life in outlying parts serves to underline the essential unity of the area of Moslem civilization.

On the whole, the Western reader, scholarly or lay, will come away from the present book with an impression of Islam closely paralleling the judgment pronounced by Dr. Ghorbal in one of his most lucid and perceptive paragraphs. "The influence [of Western civilization on Islam] has been so great that even when the Islamic peoples have regained their political independence they have found that a return to the traditional way of life was not possible—even if it were desirable. It needs to be emphasized that such a return is not deemed desirable even when lip service is paid to the glorious traditions of the past. . . . It must be realized that although the long history of Islam has bequeathed to modern times a rich legacy, no society can meet the needs of our times by drawing on its inner resources alone. The Islamic Society—as well as all other societies—must recognize the inadequacy of its own resources and its duties to humanity at large. Possession of the world religion is not only a privilege, it is also a responsibility."

A "Jewish" Existentialist

LE TRAITRE. By ANDRE GORZ. Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre. Editions du Seuil (Paris). 315 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by EDOUARD RODITI

IN THE heyday of the *Mercure de France,* some fifty years ago, when it was one of Europe's most intelligent literary monthlies, the French critic Jules de Gaultier, a frequent contributor, coined the word "bovarysme" in its pages to describe man's peculiar ability, unique among living creatures, "to conceive of himself as being different from what he is." In a brilliant analysis of the psychology of the characters of Flaubert's novels, and especially of Emma Bovary, de Gaultier attributed their tragic failures to erroneous views about their own nature, abilities, or talents, as a consequence of which each one of them finds himself faced with the problems of one who has "bitten off more than he can chew." An autobiography recently published in French, *Le Traître,* by André Görz, a half-Jewish former Austrian refugee from Nazi racial persecution, offers us a remarkable new example of "bovarysme" and a striking illustration of the validity of the somewhat neglected psychology of Flaubert and Jules de Gaultier.

André Görz was born in Vienna, the younger of two children of an inadequate Jewish father and an ambitious Christian mother who had hoped by her marriage to escape from her shabby petit-bourgeois Czech background. His mother had set out to have two perfect children, according to her own conventional Germanic standards; her first-born, a daughter with "angelic" golden curls, lived up to her expectations, but her son proved a disappointment in every respect. Dogged from infancy by a sense of failure, André Görz soon learned to attribute all his shortcomings to his Jewish heredity or to his being the child of a mixed marriage, someone who "belongs nowhere." When the Germans invaded Austria, he felt bitterly humiliated because he could not, like most of his classmates, become a Nazi overnight. It seems never to have occurred to him that to be a Jew might under more normal circumstances have offered sufficient compensations for a sense of being "different," or that there might be some Gentiles who have no desire to be coarse and vulgar brutes. His descriptions of the classmates whom he admired, are, in this respect, symptomatic of his own inadequate ideals.

Shortly before World War II, Görz was sent, at great sacrifice to his parents, to a boarding school in Switzerland. He appears to feel that he owes his family no gratitude and expresses no interest at all in their fate. Nor does he seem ever to have returned to Austria. Instead, a few years after the war, he managed to settle in France, where he has basked ever since in the sunshine of the presence of Jean-Paul Sartre and other leading Existentialists. Frustrated in his ambition to be what he believed all normal Germans and Austrians to be, refusing to be at all like his own father whom he assumed to be a typical Jew, Görz decided as an exile in a Swiss-German school to become what he believed the French to be, without ever having been to France or associated with Frenchmen. He might just as well have decided to be a Norwegian, a Peruvian, a Parsee, or a Hottentot. In this way, Görz became a typical Left Bank Paris Existentialist—if not the wordiest, the most argumentative, self-centered, and humorless of the whole tribe of those who, since the publication of Sartre's

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L'Etre et le Néant, have repeatedly tried to point out, on the basis of their own awareness of alienation, the shortcomings of both Marxian and Freudian thought.

Le Traître contains a few pages of vivid description of the author's family background in Vienna and of life in the Austrian capital at the time of the *Anschluss.* One is left with the impression that the Görz family had much in common with the family of Leo Fischl, in Robert Musil's great novel about the decay of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, *The Man Without Qualities.* But Görz has none of the subtlety and humor of Musil's psychological insights and is too exclusively concerned with himself to make the most of the opportunities offered him. He argues so endlessly about Marxist, Freudian, or Existentialist theory that he neglects, for instance, to let his readers know what happened, under the Nazi regime, to his unfortunate parents or his sister, and fails likewise to describe or identify either of the women, L. and Kay, who are mentioned as having played some part in his life as an apprentice-Existentialist in Switzerland or in Paris. He is too self-centered even to describe at all adequately his own pseudonymous Messiah, the French writer Morel, who is obviously Sartre. *Le Traître* is thus a strange book: a remarkable exercise in an artificial and compulsive pseudo-psychological jargon, it might well be described as "much Urdu about nothing," were it not that it mishandles a real problem and is assumed, in Sartre's weirdly rhetorical and tangential preface, as well as in most of the reviews by Paris critics, to be a brilliant analysis of the problems of the Jew or of the half-Jew in contemporary society.

ONE CANNOT help feeling that Görz is a new Emma Bovary, doomed to a tragic failure because he entertains such absurdly wrong notions about his own character and identity—although Sartre and their Existentialist friends lack the insight of Flaubert in that they accept Görz on his own terms, as a brilliant thinker rather than as a tragic fool. *Le Traître* is so pedestrian an imitation of some of the writings of Sartre that the latter might well say about the book, as Flaubert said about Emma Bovary —with due allowance for the difference between a great character of literature and a pretentious contemporary *littérateur—"André Görz, c'est moi!"*

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view, *Le Traître* can be studied as a rare example of the survival, in postwar Western Europe, of a psychological syndrome that was once widely prevalent among middle-class assimilated Jews, especially in Austria, Hungary, and France, and especially among children of mixed marriages. Toward the turn of the century, this attitude found its most eloquent expression in Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character,* a book that inspired a whole phalanx of Nazi authors to whom such a testimony, from the lips of a Jew was a godsend. Though increasingly rare in literature, the anti-Semitism of the *Juif malgré lui* who remains utterly ignorant of Judaism is still likely to manifest itself for a long while among Jewish neurotics who may be too ignorant to have recourse to psychoanalysis or who remain convinced that it is beneath their dignity. Whatever the circumstances that encourage such a lack of basic self-respect, it can manifest itself only in a morbid personality.

Youth Past and Present

THE UNSILENT GENERATION: AN ANONYMOUS SYMPOSIUM IN WHICH ELEVEN COLLEGE SENIORS LOOK AT THEMSELVES AND THEIR WORLD. Compiled and edited with a Foreword by OTTO BUTZ. Rinehart. 189 pp. $2.95.

Reviewed by ROBERT GUTMAN

WHAT is today's college generation like? This question has been asked with increasing frequency in the last decade. Many adults suspect that the present crop of students lacks the moral, political, and intellectual virtues of the men and women who were in the universities in the 1920's and 1930's. In this volume of anonymous autobiographies by eleven Princeton seniors, edited by Otto Butz, one of their teachers, we are offered evidence with which to confirm or reject the generally pessimistic answers. The authors come from all regions of the nation and include the full range of social classes at Princeton. Three are Catholics and three are Jews. In their essays they comment on what they want out of life; their ideas of happiness, success, and marriage; their conception of moral problems; and their attitudes toward the future of America and mankind.

As I read through the autobiographies, I was struck by the fundamental loneliness of the students and the lack of any profound communication among them. They would report some feeling or sentiment as being uniquely their own, and then the same feeling would be revealed in the next autobiography: guilt about sexual relations, for example, or doubt about the existence of God. Anyone who admits to anguish in front of other students, even to a single friend, is not regarded as *smooth* or *cool.* It may seem odd that this should be the case with Princeton students, for Princeton attracts students partly because social relations there are supposedly more intimate and warmer than in a state university or an urban college. But it is precisely in the small campus college that personal loneliness is most likely to develop. The organization of undergraduate life in these colleges creates more social relationships than are necessary. To put it in another way, the ties between students become too close for the purposes they have to serve. As a consequence, each individual student is forced to find an area of private feeling to protect himself against the pressures of false intimacy. Add to these burdens the fact of American uneasiness about affectionate relationships between men, and it is not hard to understand why Princeton students could find the expression of personal feeling so threatening.

Their difficulty in communicating among themselves is reflected in the readiness with which the autobiographers resort to the language of sociology and psychology when they discuss their families. A boy who cannot bring himself to admit that his mother and father hated each other, will write instead that "Mother and Father didn't have a stable marriage." Or a student who evidently is ashamed of his love for his mother, who despises her, but who feels the need to defend her at the same time, will write that "she has performed two functions for our family which have been no wise less important than what has been contributed by my father." It is all too easy to see in these statements the corruption of the student imagination by the behavioral sciences, or to recognize in them the inability of the authors to pass beyond very juvenile conceptions of family loyalty. More interesting to me is that concepts like "function" and "stability" provide the Princeton student with a way of publicizing his private experience without having to draw upon specific personal memories

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and feelings. The Jewish students, incidentally, seemed to use this technique for coping with their loneliness more than did the others. Apparently the Jews have to protect themselves against the expression of too much feeling; not only for the reasons which lead all students toward loneliness, but because Jewish students suffer the further anxiety that their feelings are somehow *Jewish feelings,* and therefore invalid in the Gentile environment of Princeton. Is it too outrageous to suggest that what Riesman has called the "Oxfordizing" of Jewish students in Ivy League settings is related to the general problem of student loneliness?

If LONELINESS is one of the great secret problems of our youth, and if the expression of feeling to overcome that loneliness has such a threatening countenance, perhaps it is not too surprising that the expression of the self through physical activity should be one of the distinctive marks of college life. I have in mind the drinking bouts, furtive sexual games, wild parties, and mass athletics reported by the authors. In the Bacchanalian revelries of crowds intoxicated on liquor or sex the barriers to self-expression are lowered temporarily, and an identification with the group wipes away the sense of isolation. Never again in ordinary adult life will the educated American male overcome his inner loneliness so effectively. The alumni sentiment of most small colleges is built on the fantasied memories of these orgiastic experiences. When these students return to the campus for the decennial reunion, it is these rites of college life that they will desperately, often pathetically, try to re-enact, as their wives and families watch anxiously from the sidelines (if they have not been shunted off beforehand to a ladies' tea or to a children's movie by the efficient and understanding alumni office staff).

It seems to me that the devotion to the *rah-rah* of college is more universal in middle-class culture today than in the last century, in direct proportion to the degree to which bureaucratic organization and suburban life have made it difficult for an adult to acquire roots and a sense of belonging. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., once unwittingly called attention to this phenomenon of modern society. Speaking at his fiftieth reunion at Brown University, he said that "only here did I enjoy a completely independent personality. There has been nothing in my life since then quite like this

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An announcement of books recently published by the UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA Press

Of Choh-Ming Li's ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNIST CHINA, subtitled "An Appraisal of the First Five Years of Industrialization," the *Wall Street Journal* said, "This is definitely a book for anyone who wants a thorough, unbiased, scientific study of Red China's economy—without adjectives, frills, or padding." Mr. Li, who taught in several Chinese universities, served as Deputy Director-General of the Chinese Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. 300 pages, $7.50.

Ever since the Communist Party came to power in the State of Kerala, increasing attention has been given to the Party in India. COMMUNISM IN INDIA, by Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, is a dispassionate and very detailed account of the Party in both its international and domestic aspects. The volume describes the history of Communism in India from 1920 to the present. 540 pages, $10.00.

Among other books we have published recently are several more which have a special interest for the readers of COMMENTARY, but which we can only note briefly here. CITY LIFE IN JAPAN, by R. P. Dore, is an incipient classic in urban anthropology, and a welcome antidote to the largely faddish and aniquated ideas about Japan now circulating here (482 pages, $6.75). PILOT PROJECT, INDIA, by Albert Mayer *et al.*, describes the immensely important rural development work at Etawah, Uttar Pradesh, a model of democratic utilization of existing traditions (392 pages, $5.50). TITOISM IN ACTION, by Fred Warner Neal, is a firsthand study of the Yugoslavs' attempts to develop a "new type of society" (348 pages, $6.50). NIGERIA: *Background to Nationalism*, by James S. Coleman, is an excellent introduction to what will become, in 1960, the most populated nation in Africa and the twelfth largest state in the world (524 pages, $7.50).

We wish that all of these books were available at your local bookstore. If they aren't, they can be ordered directly from the UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, BERKELEY 4, CALIFORNIA. (When remittance accompanies order we will pay book postage.)

kind of comradeship." It is understandable that one of America's richest men would look back so fondly on his college days; for, in spite of their clubs and fraternities, the Ivy League colleges are more democratic than the public thinks, whereas great wealth breeds adult loneliness. But it is rather terrifying to realize that this nostalgia should also infect the middle-manager, the liberal professional, and the other residents of suburbia.

I COULD go on to discuss other features of undergraduate culture which are suggested by these autobiographies: how smug these students are (having been admitted to Princeton, they consider themselves the cream of the nation's youth); how remote intellectual subjects are from their personal consciousness (or how arid are the imaginations of the few intellectual students); their wholly "bourgeois" conception of moral problems (to be or not to be a virgin at marriage is a big, secret issue for these boys); and their lack of human sympathy (they have only scorn for the youths who did not have the money or brains to make Princeton). But I am more interested in what these traits of mind and personality imply for any questions about the nature of this college generation. Are these students so different from earlier generations of college students in the United States? Many readers will answer in the affirmative. Clearly, they are unlike the men and women—the immigrants and children of immigrants—who worked their way through urban universities twenty to forty years ago; or the lower-class and lower-middle-class students in Chicago, New York, and Detroit today. But I am not sure they are so different from earlier generations of Princeton men. One thinks of Scott Fitzgerald, obsessed by daydreams of victory in football games he never played and heroism on French battlefields he never saw. The problem of loneliness and the inability to achieve a viable relationship between intellect and emotion plagued him until the very end.

Critics of college youth seem to have forgotten that the response, or lack of it, of today's generation reflects a traditional American attitude toward higher education and its purposes. I wonder whether the majority of students even in the 30's were wrapped up in radical movements and concerned with the problems of the adult world.

Perhaps the authors of these autobiographies

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are more callow than their predecessors. If so, we ought to blame American society as a whole which no longer provides them with habits and norms for resisting the consequences of undergraduate life. It was one thing for a John Foster Dulles or an Adlai Stevenson to revel in campus exploits at Princeton. Coming from strong families headed by men of wealth, intelligence, and responsibility, they had relatively clear-cut life goals; and college could be a pleasant interlude before the habit of hard work was taken up seriously. But today's Princeton students often were reared in families as faceless as they are themselves: families headed by small businessmen who became rich in the Second World War, by soldiers who stayed on in the ranks and became officers in the Reserve Army, or by very junior executives who are corporation big-wigs today. The boys have been shunted from one high school or prep school to another.

As the parents moved upward in the social scale, the sons have been subjected to a variety of tastes and fashions in the techniques of child-rearing, sexual behavior, clothing, music, reading, furniture, architecture, and religion. The Protestants have had to act more friendly to Jews and Catholics; the Jews and Catholics have learned to accommodate themselves to the Protestants. Even the very rich scions of the old established American families are not different in these respects. They have more money than the other students, but they, too, suffer from a lack of continuity in their traditions. For all these boys, Princeton society is likely to offer the first coherent culture in their experience: it has a fixed and circumscribed locus, a set of firm and established rules and a well-defined hierarchy of statuses. Given the context of other-directed backgrounds, I would guess that the hold of Princeton on its graduates is greater now; indeed, that the influence of undergraduate values on the adult society is going to become more rather than less pervasive.

Mr. Butz's choice of title and his Foreword imply a different view of these students. Perhaps he is sensitive to changes in their personalities which will make the present faults of less signficance in the long run. Anyhow, it is not easy to predict the adult future of undergraduates. Fate is unkind to the football hero and the student politician, and it can be equally cruel to the campus intellectual. The boy once acclaimed as a genius may now be

mad; the exceptional student may be still just a student. But then those who went unheralded in college perhaps have become prominent writers, scientists and statesmen. Our culture recognizes puberty as a great divide, but it forgets that the years between thirty and forty make another barrier which some men never surmount while it brings out the best in others. Who knows but that these Princeton students will surprise us by 1975!

It is more likely, however, that Mr. Butz and I have divergent interpretations of these autobiographies because our expectations of what these students should be able to say now, and what they ought to feel, even at this stage of life, are different. He calls them "unsilent" because they express uncertainty about their choice of careers, worry about military service, and concern about their belief in God. But in terms of this definition, almost everyone is "unsilent," including such diverse persons as the

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girl diarist, the political demagogue and the patient in a mental hospital. To deserve the label of an unsilent generation, these students would have to demonstrate an educated, sensitive, and articulate awareness of themselves and their civilization. And this they do not do.

Perhaps we should not chastise these Princeton boys for shortcomings which we, their parents and teachers, share. Our culture is notoriously "unsilent," but what does all the noise say? The mass media, the babble of the cocktail party, the controversy of the TV panel, even the psychoanalytic session—all *reveal* confusion and loneliness, but do they actually express it?

Newspapers and the News

THE SUGAR PILL. By T. S. MATTHEWS. Simon & Schuster. 221 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by ERWIN D. CANHAM

THE modern newspaper suffers from the concessions it must make in solving the severe economic problem of holding a mass audience. Only with such an audience can most newspapers hope to survive. This means that the newspaper must satisfy a kind of mass taste. Such a task is infinitely more difficult, and unpalatable, than the job of newspapers in the 19th century. Then each catered to a particular, limited public, with well-defined prejudices and preferences. The grim casualties among American newspapers in recent months are a warning that the problem must be solved on some terms or other if people are to be served by news printed each day.

T. S. Matthews spent most of his term in American journalism on the staff of *Time* magazine, from 1929 to 1953. Then he migrated to London. From his British eyrie he watched and wrote about affairs in the United States as a dispassionate critic. Now in *The Sugar Pill* he dissects and discusses affectionately two important newspapers: the *Daily Mirror* of London, which has the world's largest daily circulation, and the *Manchester Guardian,* which is one of the world's most respected newspapers.

His thesis, indicated by his book's title, is that the press is not the world's daily bread, but its sugar pill. From this stricture he does not exempt even the *Guardian,* although he says he likes its flavor (spelled, British style, flavour). His account gives a vivid picture of the men and principles by which the two newspapers are produced.

Two more different men than Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe, who created modern British popular journalism, and C. P. Scott, who molded the *Manchester Guardian,* can scarcely be imagined. One was a genius at giving the public what it wanted: an effervescent cocktail. The other propounded and lived what ought to be the people's conscience. Mr. Matthews tells how the institutions these two men created continue to do their work today. It is a fascinating report. "On balance," he concludes, "I prefer the *Guardian* to the *Mirror.* For one thing, I think the *Guardian* might really be useful in the long run—if the run is long; perhaps the only possible kind of spoke-in-the-wheel to the Juggernaut of Progress, which seems bound to crush us all but may be impeded. . . . Though the *Mirror* is flawed, it is the truest mirror we have of our culture (i.e., our expenditure), as the *Guardian* is one of the truest guardians of our civilization (i.e., our capital)."

More important is what Matthews has to say about journalism altogether. Not only does he deny that the information furnished by newspapers constitutes the people's daily bread, but he doubts if even the best newspapers report much news, or the most important news, and he insists that the press does not have great power.

The kind of power a newspaper has, he says, is a nasty sort of power—to hurt somebody's reputation, to bully somebody. "Its vaunted might is a gigantic spoof"; it cannot make or break governments, or swing an election. As for news, he insists that newspapermen rarely know what it is and fabricate a great deal of it. "The press is only a reflection of the world it reports," he concludes, "and like the world it's quite unable to recognize or accept really good news—a saint for the ages, a hero both immediate and lasting, a revelation of permanent truth; it can only exaggerate or minimize, ignore, misreport or doubt, just like the rest of us. Big bad news it can't miss; big good news it never sees—though it pretends a lot of good little news is big, and manufactures all the big good news it can. What keeps the press going is mainly snippets: some news, much gossip, loads of rumors—not to speak of all the features, extras, special acts, and entertaining etceteras."

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Beyond any doubt, the sugar coating around the pill is very thick in many newspapers, and there is some of it in all. But is there no core—no ultimate basis of hard news, as he seems to imply? Here I think Mr. Matthews exaggerates, and the distortion is central to his thesis. All newspapers, even the worst, do give their readers some final residuum of news. Their problem is the kind of diet their readers can consume. Of course newspapers include too much trivia. Of course this kind of irresponsibility is very damaging to society. Of course they could do much better, and still survive. But when all is said and done, there is some thing at the heart of the sugar pill.

Mr. Matthews, following the example of many others, seeks to diminish the role of American newspapers by pointing out that during the twenty years of Democratic party government under Roosevelt and Truman, something like 85 per cent of the American press was owned and controlled by Republicans and newspaper readers were being frequently exhorted to vote Republican. This is reasonably true as far as the editorial page is concerned. But the trouble is that it ignores the news pages. And what happened in the headlines on page one was far more important than what was happening in the editorials. Roosevelt and Truman, both of whom were highly skilled in press relations, were constantly winning the battle of the headlines. They were making news, or what passes for it, or both. And the newspaper, as a chief vehicle for conveying their policies and personalities to the people, helped to put and keep them in power. True, there was distorted treatment of the news by Republican publishers and staffs. But there was not enough of it to deprive the Democratic presidents and their supporters of the immense power of the headlines.

At bottom, Mr. Matthews distrusts people and dislikes modern civilization. He thinks citizens get as good newspapers as they deserve. In this respect he may be right. But after all his cynical arguments and smart phrases, his insight and his rhetoric, one cannot help feeling that this book is not worthy of his best perception. In this respect, as he might say, it is authentic journalism.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

A. V. Sherman, a former London *Observer* correspondent in Israel, reviewed Karl Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* in January.

R. W. Flint has published critical essays in *Partisan Review* and other journals.

Robert E. Fitch, dean of the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley is now a visiting lecturer at the University of Hawaii.

G. E. von Grunebaum, a new contributor, is director of the Near Eastern Center at the University of California, and is the author of several books on Islam.

Edouard Roditi is the author of *Poems, 1928-1948* and *Oscar Wilde*. He has written regularly for Commentary from Europe.

Robert Gutman teaches sociology at the Newark branch of Rutgers University.

Erwin D. Canham, editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*, was recently elected President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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A COMMENTARY FIRST

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

The Secret Heart Within the Secret Annex

(May 1952)

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK—II

First Love—and Finis

(June 1952)

The condensation of the Diary, which appeared under these titles in our issues of May and June 1952, marked the first publication in English of this moving document. Later that same year Doubleday and Company brought out the complete book.

The editors of COMMENTARY are proud to have introduced *Anne Frank* in the United States.

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